

**DRINKING AND DRIVING: AN EXPLORATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF
CONVICTED DRINK DRIVERS' SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED IDEAS ON
HOW THEY CAME TO OFFEND**

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explored with a group of male drink drivers how the social constructions they held about themselves as drinkers, drivers or drinking drivers and the personal rules they developed to avoid offending contributed to or hindered their offending.

Fifty male convicted drink drive offenders, who had attended a rehabilitation course, subsequently were interviewed on the basis of self-recorded drinking of at least 40+ units of alcohol per week. This study seeks to understand the sense people made of the events leading to their offending. The study did not confirm assumptions that drink drive offenders were all heavy consumers of alcohol, problem drinkers, persistent offenders or drivers who regularly drove when drunk.

The majority claimed they had not wanted to offend and that they had actively developed personal rules to avoid drinking above the limit and then driving. The factors that led to the breakdown of these rules were explored. This raised questions about the intentions, expectancies and social constructions that constituted these drivers' desire not to offend. The study tried to discern such social constructions and the part they played in bringing about the offence.

The study has shown that the person's understanding of his drinking patterns and styles is critical to not offending, as are some constructions that commonly define 'drinking' and 'driving'. In the absence of accurate information about alcohol or the law, people relied on these social constructions, but limited by their personal feelings. There were too many inaccurate factors in their constructions, understandings and behaviour to avoid offending.

Public policy, as one shaper of social constructions, is discussed and some findings for future policy suggested.

DEDICATION

To Margaret for always being there

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I wish to acknowledge the readiness of the 50 men, who are the subjects of this study, to speak openly with me. Without their help the study could not have taken place.

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DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS THESIS

This is a field in which there are frequently used abbreviations in article titles. It is thus inevitable that, in quoting from other sources, some abbreviations and terms will be used. The commonly used terms are stated below:

AA	Alcoholics Anonymous. Self help groups of people who acknowledge they are dependent upon alcohol. Now international in scope. Most local groups continue to be entirely managed by the members.
ABV	Alcohol By Volume. The industry standard way of measuring the alcohol strength of particular drinks
ADH	Alcohol dehydrogenase. An enzyme occurring during the metabolism of alcohol by the liver and used as a marker for measuring the amount of alcohol in blood
AUDIT	Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test developed by the World Health Organisation
BAC	Blood Alcohol Concentration. This expresses the proportion of alcohol, in milligrams, in 100 millilitres of blood. This may be written in different ways as 80 mg/100 mltrs; 80 mg%; .08mg or .08%
BMA	British Medical Association
BrAC	Breath Alcohol Concentration. This expresses the proportion of alcohol, in micrograms, in 100 millilitres of breath. This may be written in different ways as 80 µg/100 mltrs; 80 µg%; .08µg or .08%. The letter 'm' also expresses the Greek letter 'µ'
CENSUS	Household censuses are held every 10 years in UK and include details of car ownership etc. They are published by HMSO
CfIT	Commission for Integrated Transport
DD	Drink Driving – alcohol plays a part but the level may not be known, does not exceed the legal limit or exceeds it only to a limited degree
DDR	Drink Driver Rehabilitation and specifically the Drink Driver Rehabilitation Scheme introduced into the UK in 1993
D-D	Drunk Driving – where the legal limit is considerably exceeded.
DETR	Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions
DoH	Department of Health
DoT	Department of Transport
DfT	Department for Transport
DTLR	Department of Transport, Local Government and the Region

DUI	Driving Under the Influence of alcohol
DWI	Driving Whilst Intoxicated The latter two terms are legal terminology in some states of America and serve to highlight a difference in USA law as against most other countries
GGT	An enzyme in the liver, gammaglutamyl transferase. The level present is used as an indication of liver damage and as a proxy for regular, long-term taking of alcohol in excess of the safe health limits.
ICADTS	The International Council on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety who have held regular international conferences since 1950 and published the proceedings as the xth International Conference on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety.
INRETS	Institut National de Recherche sur les Transports et leur Sécurité based at Arcueil, France.
Legal Limit	That level of alcohol in the blood at which it is presumed that a driver is by definition impaired. In the UK 80 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood is the level set in law at which a driver becomes, by definition, unfit to drive. In most EU states the level in law is 50 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood.
MAST	Michigan Alcohol Screening Test
National Traffic Surveys	National Traffic Surveys have been conducted for the Transport Department in 1965-6, 1972-3, 1975-6, 1978-9, 1985-6 and since 1988 continuously
Presumptive Law	The law in the USA is presumptive so that a reading over the legal limit is a presumption of impaired driving and the defence has the task of proving that at that level of alcohol this driver was not impaired.
Per se law	Requiring it to be shown only that the driver was above the legal limit and thus by definition unfit or impaired. (Clayton 1997)
RBT	Random breath testing. Defined as the ability of the police to stop and test any or all drivers at a particular place and time. This is confused in the UK where the requirement is that the police have suspicion that a driver might have consumed alcohol. This leads some police forces to practice random testing whilst others do not feel they have that power.
WHO	World Health Organisation

Note on Government responsibility:

The Department of Transport became part of the Department of Transport, Local

Government and the Regions, under the ministerial responsibility of the deputy prime Minister, with the new government in 1997. This then became the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions and later was recognised as being too unwieldy and became the Department for Transport.

PREFACE: THE RESEARCHER'S INTEREST IN THE DRINKING DRIVER

Consideration of the drinking of alcohol has always posed me with some intellectual challenges. I grew up in a totally abstaining family. Yet there was no attempt to indoctrinate or pressure me to any position. Rather it was a family where alcohol never featured in our life at all and it was not a matter of any interest, far less an issue. Nevertheless I did come to understand that drinking alcohol was 'wrong' in some indefinable way and was certainly a suspect behaviour in which I did not need to partake. When undertaking my two years of national service in the army, for the first time, I met friends and companions for whom Friday evening was the chance to go out and get drunk. They sometimes had difficulty getting back to camp and often into bed, felt unwell next morning and occasionally acted in ways that brought disciplinary action. We were paid little enough – I asked myself, whatever was it that took these colleagues to spend that hard earned money in such a manner? I could find no rational answer. Intellectually I rejected the total abstinence position of my parents and argued for a temperate position, but this did not alter my own non-consumption. I did not need alcohol, had few spare resources to spend on it and just did not consume it at all. It remained a non-issue.

In my late 30's I made a career change and also moved home, and, amidst all the practical changes that this meant for us as a family, a deliberate choice was made to start consuming wine on some occasions. Those occasions were when friends were entertained or there was some celebration within the immediate family. But, as our extended families did not consume, the abstaining continued when with them. The grounds for deciding to use alcohol on some occasions were that it was a common thing to do among our contemporaries and carried no ill effects among them that I could discern. Also, as it was a common feature for our friends, I assumed it must be pleasurable – so let us as a family also participate. Thus I became an occasional drinker, happy to leave alcohol alone or to take it, even on a daily basis, in small pleasurable quantities.

Growing up before, during and after the 1939-45 war, I had little experience of cars. My family did not own one and the opportunity to travel in one came only rarely as very few of my parents' friends owned cars. Again it was the army, during my national service, that brought me into contact with vehicles and colleagues who were already accomplished drivers. I, too, desired that skill and had the opportunity to be shown what driving involved, and was allowed to attempt to drive myself, usually in some deserted part of the artillery ranges we frequented. Once a kindly junior officer even gave me a lesson! It became clear to me that, once I left college, I could be in a situation in which it would be a necessity to drive, and as my future parents-in-law by then had a car, I was able to practice driving on the few occasions when I stayed in their home. I booked a driving test and was given a few opportunities to drive with a family member as mentor. I passed the test on that 1956 occasion and within months had to purchase my first car. Since then I have driven almost continually, with annual mileages ranging from as little as 5 or 6,000 to 25 even 30,000 miles, depending on the circumstances. I have tried to be a safe driver and have been involved in no more than 3-4 minor bumps and grazes, not usually my fault. I have twice been convicted for speeding, both occasions when I was not concentrating on my driving.

Intellectually I studied theology at college, where the fundamental positions of the literal school of biblical interpretation were challenged and I adopted a more liberal stance. Almost as soon as I began to work in pastoral situations, I felt inadequate to

understand and to help the people I met. From 1957 onwards I began looking for additional training to assist me in this work. That led me to training and practising as a marriage counsellor and later to studying for a social science diploma and to formal university training as a psychiatric social worker.

It was then that, as a new social worker, I dealt with a request to receive seven children into care from a family in which the father, whilst holding down a good job, drank every night at the neighbouring pub. He returned home a different man, now angry, uncouth, often sick, needing but refusing assistance to get to bed and occasionally violent. After more than 20 years, his wife, sick and tired of this narrowed unpleasant lifestyle, had obtained a judicial separation. When she and the children were relocated, her husband, perceived to be 'alcoholic', on his own volition stopped drinking altogether and started to woo his estranged wife as he had courted her years before. Such behaviour did not fit any of the teaching or experience I had previously encountered.

Later, as notions around the consumption of alcohol interested me, I assisted the local alcohol advisory service in a consultative capacity as a committee member. Then the opportunity to direct that service was a challenge I gladly accepted. The constellation of concerns, anxieties and other matters that brought people to that service as alcohol consumers was very wide and varied. Stereotypical understandings, gained from the literature of the field, were often irrelevant to the person requesting help. It was an interesting challenge to work effectively with them as individuals.

I accepted the opportunity to design a course, submit it for approval and to be selected as one of the first group of Organisers of the Drink Driver Rehabilitation Scheme and take it on as a part of that challenge. It was also, perhaps more importantly, another way by which the service I led could develop its work, as well as securing a firmer financial base. The course I designed was developed from the principles that were then operative and current in the alcohol field. Actually working with convicted drinking drivers, in a group context, also developed that challenge in a different direction. The questions that were posed for me at the start related to the sort of people these drinkers, who then drove, would prove to be? Would they be addicted, problem or at least heavy drinkers, with a range of anti-social attitudes and a desire to live dangerously, to the detriment of themselves and a possible danger to others? The literature posited that a good percentage would be addicted and a further percentage would exhibit a collection of anti-social behaviours and hold challenging views and attitudes. Could we find techniques and methods that would effectively engage these people? How would the slippery notions of addiction and dependence interact with this group of people?

The reality of meeting with different groups of drink drive offenders was in stark contrast to the anticipations. People were fearful that they would be put through some shock tactics with video material of road accidents that they could not face or bear, and amazed that there could possibly be 16 hours of material to be covered, but wanting to learn whatever was on offer. Both parties had to overcome their built in assumptions and it was crucial that an atmosphere of open honesty was created and course members soon learned that there was nothing to be gained by lying. For remedial reasons, each member of a course spent a few minutes outlining the circumstances of their offence. As I listened to these brief accounts, it became clear to me that my initial expectations, taken from previous research, were not being borne out. For these accounts were indicating that very few had times when they knew they were drink driving and did not care, a few knew or thought they were and took avoiding action such as driving a 'safe' route home or at a time when police

activity was limited but the majority for most of the time did have pre-existent personal rules in order to avoid driving after drinking. On the particular occasion of their offence the personal practice had been changed or set aside. Course participants were embarrassed to share their stories for they felt that what they had done was so stupid or atypical. They felt ashamed or guilty, for almost no one wanted or was trying to be a drinking driver. Yet some had regularly and consistently driven after drinking, so what mechanisms had they used to move from being an 'I don't do it' person to a convicted offender? Thus began a series of questions that led to the desire to explore these matters at a greater depth, and to this study.

1 INTRODUCTION

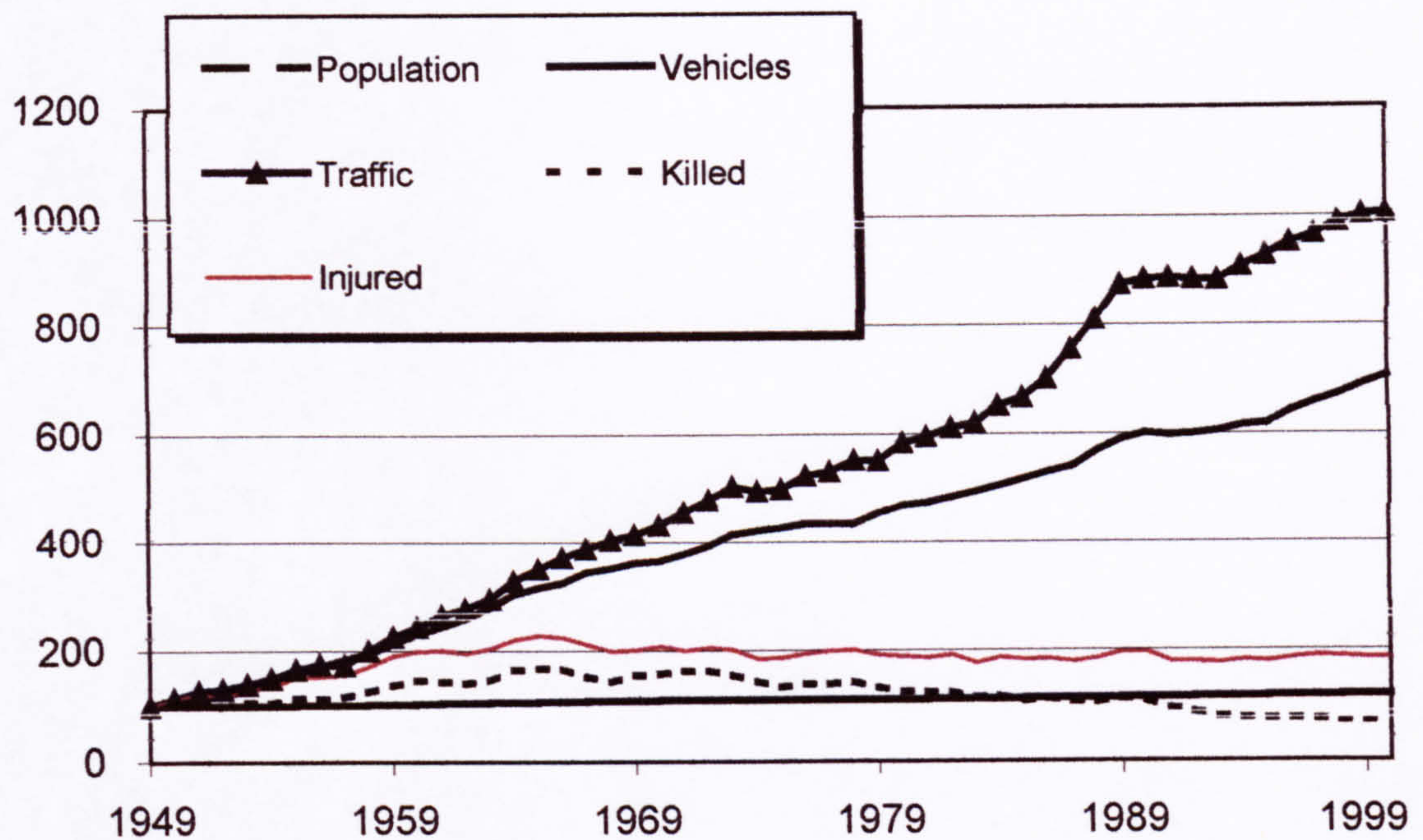
In 1806, the British Parliament, unreformed and largely representative of the upper classes of society, passed an act that made it an offence for horse carriage drivers to be under the influence of alcohol and endangering the safety of passengers on the King's highway. Passing such an Act gave a high premium to the ability of travellers to travel safely and unhindered by those who were rendered less than competent or dangerous as a result of consuming alcohol. There were implicit ideas in this legislation that the function of roads was to enable people to travel along them safely and secure in the knowledge that nothing untoward was going to happen. This was so because there were implied standards of competence expected of coach drivers, who were handling horses capable of independent action if frightened. There was also a duty of care and consideration for other travellers laid upon the drivers. The animals were to be under the control of and directed by drivers who were capable and competent in carrying out those functions. Failure to achieve these standards or expectations was deviant behaviour that warranted public condemnation, and the perpetrator labelled as an offender and punished as a wrongdoer.

Legislation still has such expectations and such behaviour has, of course, continued to the present day and is still considered as an offence. Yet accidents happened then and have continued and will continue to occur for that is the nature of accidents. There is no element of human behaviour that can be risk free. (Adams 1995) We all view such accidental events through cultural filters and cultural theory (Thompson et al 1990 discussed in Adams 1995) provides some analysis of the different perspectives adopted. This study is an attempt to discover from individual drivers, adjudged to have offended against the current laws, how they came to offend and how they considered the matter. Their views will be set against the cultural background in later chapters.

Here I wish to make two points as background material. Since 1806 the roads and the transport using them have changed out of all recognition. The population, the road network, numbers of cars on the roads, people allowed to drive and the miles driven have all dramatically increased (See Census 2001, National Traffic Surveys). For example, in the half century between 1949 and 1999, Chart 1 (DETR 2000) shows how, against an almost constant population index at 100, the indices of vehicles has steadily risen to almost 700 and the amount of traffic has increased tenfold to an index of 1000. Against such dramatic changes the considered view of government has remained remarkably consistent.

The second point is that the probability of a fatal accident is very small when plotted against all deaths. Adams (1995) shows that out of 628,000 deaths in 1991 only 12,816 were the result of an accident. Of these 4,568 were the results of road accidents and 660 involved drinking drivers according to the accepted methods of calculating such deaths. Road traffic deaths have fallen steadily over many years in the UK. Whilst it is impossible accurately to establish the relationship, from the different evidential strands available, Masurel (2001) estimated "that 5% of all road casualties and 13 per cent of road deaths occurred when someone was driving over the legal limit" in 1999. Accepting that "all attempts to formalize and quantify the making of decisions about risk are fragile vessels afloat on the sea of uncertainty" (p.56 Adams 1995), it is tenable to assume that drivers who drink alcohol, in the UK, are no more likely than the remainder of the driving population to be involved in accidents, though when they are, there is a greater than usual chance of a fatality.

Chart 1 - Indices of population, vehicle stock, motor traffic and casualties: 1949 - 2001



1949 = 100

The concern of Parliament two centuries ago for people to travel safely on the roads and for drivers to be in control of their vehicles at all times has to a considerable extent been met. Nevertheless the legislative concern of 1806 has a current immediacy and relevancy, for there is no room for complacency when, on average, 10 people a week are still killed on UK roads through accidents involving drivers with illegal levels of alcohol in them. This is an horrendous cost of human life, bringing untold pain and misery. It leaves a serious question concerning the major public policy relating to 'drink driving' and whether, as a continuation of old legislation, it now has the impact envisaged by Parliament in 1806 and is targeted correctly.

Further questions ask whether drivers have accepted the thrust of that first law, and why alcohol drinkers have been consistently opposed to each step of the developing legislation. One central element of this thesis is to explore these matters. From my own experience I imagine that well into the 1960's, if not later, those who owned and drove cars were the relatively rich, often leisured and powerful. I assume that driving joined drinking alcohol as an integral accompaniment to many of their social activities. Thus increasing regulation of such leisured activities, was a challenge even a threat to the heart of their social life. As car ownership extended through all socio-economic groups (see Census data and National Travel Surveys), the car joined alcohol as a major element in people's leisure activities. Such personal elements of life should not, in the view of some in this study, have need of any regulation by the state at all (see MacAndrew and Edgerton 1969). Ben is one example who became a car dealer at 18 with an ambition to be a millionaire by 30. As part of his lifestyle then partying and nightclubs were a regular and essential feature, always driving the latest car and his only concern was not to have an accident for that would legitimately have brought him to the attention of the police. These factors and others amount to a conclusive view, for so many drivers who currently produce websites, that this is an area of life

that should remain unregulated and any attempt to regulate it is an intrusion into private liberty.

Chapter 2 looks at the context of this research in a broad context. The international scene is briefly reviewed after the first international conference in 1950. A case study approach is taken to the review of UK policy throughout the 20th century with particular attention given to the experimental Drink Driver Rehabilitation Scheme. Within the British justice system, it remains a novel scheme and one of the major shifts in policy towards drivers deemed unfit through alcohol to drive. The scheme gives assistance, guidance and information to convicted drink drivers through the offender attending a course for which s/he pays and in return receives a reduction in the length of the driving disqualification as fixed by the magistrates. Although the scheme had already been piloted in the 1980's, there remained uncertainties with the policy makers as to the efficacy of the scheme, and it was introduced in only some 20 courts in the country. That was the situation when this study was undertaken. Because the scheme provided the immediate context for this study and its participants, the local aspects of the scheme are given in detail.

This thesis is concerned with the phenomenon of driving with alcohol in the body, and its research element was undertaken in the years 1995-1997. As is seen in chapter 2, one purpose of the study was to ask whether those interviewed confirmed the assumptions that drink drive offenders are heavy consumers of alcohol, 'problem drinkers', persistent offenders or drivers who regularly decide to drive when drunk. A further aim was to see how it was that the majority attending DDR courses claimed they did not want to be offenders, had feelings of shame or guilt at having offended and had actively tried not to offend as drink drivers. I also wanted to discover what factors had contributed to their offending. Had the lack of accurate knowledge of alcohol, the inaccuracies in the recognition of the true nature of their drinking and the assumption that everyone drank in the same way, held by course participants been such factors?

These issues raise questions about the intentions, expectancies and social constructions of drinking drivers. Reflection upon the accounts of DDR course participants, as presented to me, indicated that many people had pre-existent personal rules in order to avoid drinking above the limit and then driving, but, on the particular occasion of their offence, personal practice had been set aside. As the number of accounts increased it became possible to group the accounts into 'categories of circumstances that set aside the usual practice'. Could a typology thus be developed that would imply that drink drivers would or would not offend if enumerated circumstances applied? Matters are not that simple and other deeper forces appeared to be operative.

The study tried to discern and then examine, from an ethnographic perspective, what were the circumstances by which these drivers had come to offend to see what part they had played in bringing about the offence. If they wanted to avoid this offence what were the socially constructed ideas, values and attitudes towards drink driving that constituted their 'not wanting to offend'. For the sample of male drinking drivers the study asked whether the ideas that lay within these drivers were explanations of their offending behaviour. Had, and if so, how had these drivers' social constructions contributed towards their convictions of 'driving whilst unfit through drink'? Had the circumstances operative at the time of their offences contributed to or modified their socially constructed ideas? The particular element that marks this study from others is that I, as the researcher, discussed matters with individual drivers in some depth, seeking to understand what sense they made of the events that categorised them as convicted offenders. But the study is neither a

psychological exploration of individuals' feelings, conceptions and rules, nor of the psychological processes by which they came to set aside or break such rules. It seems important to make the thrust of this study clear in this unequivocal manner because there are so many inherent dilemmas in any consideration of this aspect of human behaviour, and setting out to study it with academic rigour provides a clear need for precision in our understanding of what it is that is being studied in this project.

A further purpose of the study is fulfilled by an examination of the public policies, in chapter 2, that seek to address drink driving behaviour, for they are an integral part of the process of social construction.

Many studies in the field have been undertaken from an objective and statistical approach that did not give me a clear insight of how individuals came to act. Yet how can one come to understand another's action? The strands of this conundrum are explored in chapter 3. There it is recognised that the only answer is that one cannot get into the mind or self of another and thus 'know' them. Indeed 'self' is a mystery for us all as we find many ways to make presentations of ourselves to others, each one different. Thus, on the one hand, an attempt to understand another may only be a dynamic process in which falseness abounds? But, on the other hand, most people would claim times and people where and with whom we have felt understood. So the researcher, knowing the limitations of the endeavour itself the process and the difficulty of knowing ourselves, proceeds with caution, seeking, not the objective study of one person by another, but to use an hermeneutic approach that tries to find the other's point of view and so claim some understanding of him.

This type of qualitative research cannot be reduced to particular techniques. Rather it is a dynamic process linking problems, theories and methods. As such it requires that a range of questions concerning matters as diverse as the nature of experience, understanding, self-consciousness, presentation of self, subjective as against objective and the whole notion of 'science' be examined. This is done in chapter 3 where I accept that it is through social activity that we gain self-understanding and the construction that, for each of us, is 'me'. This allows this to be a sociological rather than a psychological study and to use a Grounded Theory approach. This recognises that analysis is not about quantifying data but is a process of interpretation that discovers concepts and relationships and organises these into a theoretical explanatory scheme. Other approaches are also discussed in the chapter.

Chapter 3 also explores the rationale for using in depth interviews, where the purpose was to hear the person's account and to follow up, and clarify it. As such interviews are a dynamic process the researcher needs to be as clear as possible about his approach, assumptions and unexplored feelings and these are also discussed. Finally in this chapter the protocol for choosing the sample are outlined.

For me, drink driving is not a phenomenon that can be divorced from the social constructions and policy decisions that shape the appreciation people have of their behaviour. That statement relates not only to people in general but to the individuals who had committed and been convicted of the offence and with whom I started to work in 1993, and am still so working. Their grasp of driving with alcohol in the body and the constructions they had of their own offending behaviour were matters that did not appear to accord with any of my previous assumptions. Neither did these people seem to fit readily with any of the theories that were then current. With my background, the logical step was to spend some specified time with a set

number of these offenders, and explore these matters with them in structured but reflective and informal interviews, and try to understand and make sense of the implicit conundrums presented by their offending. Alternative approaches, the reasons for carrying out the study in the way outlined here, the methods used and the details of the data analysis are also discussed in chapter 3.

At this point in the study I examine what other theoretical explanations there have been concerning drink driving. Much of the work has been located in disciplines concerned primarily with road safety and especially the avoidance of accidents. But the point of interest for me has been the part played by the driver. The role of the alcohol the driver has consumed is clearly important and there are studies detailing the significance of alcohol and the precise ways by which it alters the performance of people in general and drivers in particular. There is a great deal of research in the alcohol field in general and about driving with alcohol in the body in particular, fields that do, to some extent, overlap. There are different approaches dependant upon the academic disciplines of the researchers and the philosophical positions they adopt. Some studies, though important, deal with matters such as the characteristics of people dependent upon alcohol, developing typologies of drinkers and methods to obtain accurate alcohol readings from people and translate these into comparable blood alcohol levels that hardly needed my consideration. Others, whilst offering important insights, were undertaken from within disciplines such as genetics, anthropology, epidemiology, economics, biology or psychology that go beyond the remit and direction of this study. Much of this work is beyond the scope of this study, which takes as a given that any alcohol impairs driving performance in some way often quite specific to the individual concerned.

Chapter 4 seeks to review the relevant theories that were current at the time of the study and that have shaped the understandings and thoughts within the field. This has been done by utilising the starting points and directions of approach, relevant to this study, which examines the subjects as alcohol consumers, as drivers and especially as drink drivers. Whilst the review seeks to provide no more than a snapshot of work current at the time of the study, the general conclusion is that there does not appear to be a single explanatory theory that accounts for all the dimensions of this subject.

The social constructions that shape the perceptions of drink driving behaviour, as well as being constructions for a majority of drivers are also held by society in general and by researchers. My own approach has been outlined in the preface and further elaborated in chapter 3. The direction from which anyone approaches the topic will be a factor in shaping the constructions held. For example, someone who has lost a close relative in a drink drive accident, that experience will clearly affect his or her construction. This is no less true for researchers where the theories current at the time of their research direct the starting points and route of study from which the subject is approached. I needed to reflect on this and recognise that it is people who are involved in this offence. They can be viewed primarily as consumers of alcohol or as drivers who exhibit certain characteristics or as drink drivers who represent a specific class of drivers and drinkers. Without, at this stage, wanting to move away from the dilemmas inherent in considering this topic, the practical matters of shaping interviews with people to explore their behaviour required me to ask about, hear and reflect upon both their alcohol consumption and their driving. In relation to the first of these, a clear parameter was chosen and only those who reported a drinking level of 40 or more units of alcohol a week were included in the study. They did not then fall into a neatly ordered coherent set of people to which precise definitions of their characteristics, as drinkers could be

assigned. Rather the constructions of themselves as alcohol consumers had to be studied, and the resulting patterns and drinking styles are explored in chapter 5.

Next chapter 6 likewise offers the results of the analysis of these drinking drivers as drivers, and again fails to discover specific and defining characteristics of them as a sub-group of all drivers.

The course, to convicted drinking drivers, quickly brought a recognition that the awareness that this set of drivers had of themselves as drinkers did not always accord with the reality their actions showed. It also soon became clear that the knowledge the majority had of alcohol, and the way human bodies deal with it, was sketchy, often inadequate and sometimes inaccurate. There was a similar lack of knowledge, understanding and uncertainty about the effects that alcohol has upon both the physical and cognitive processes in human beings. Descriptions of 'drunk' were readily available in clear and sometimes vivid colours, but many of the most relevant effects of alcohol on drivers were generally set aside as not applicable to the person or irrelevant to the processes of driving. It thus seemed to be important to explore what knowledge and conceptions the subjects of this study had of the relationship between alcohol and driving. This is reported in chapter 7.

Although there was little accurate recognition of alcohol's effects on these interviewees as motorists, there was a generally accepted construct that drink driving had negative consequences, was an offence, and should not be undertaken by sensible and mature drivers. As drinkers, these people must have had some methods for appreciating and dealing with their own behaviour as both alcohol drinkers and drivers, and these needed to be sought and uncovered. In general they had developed what it seemed appropriate to term 'personal rules'. Although these were largely individual they had some commonalities. These are analysed in chapter 8. In so far as all the subjects of this study were convicted offenders, whatever rules they had developed were either inadequate or set aside in some way or another in order for them to offend. The processes through which their rules were set aside or otherwise neglected were analysed, and the results are given in chapter 8. Further the fact that some were multiple drink drive offenders was an aspect of the study that had not been anticipated. It raised the question as to whether the previous offence or offences had or had not modified the rules people adopted and their behaviour either as alcohol drinkers or drivers. These matters were analysed but are not reported.

The last chapter analysing the interviews of this study is concerned with the processes by which those interviewed came to offend as drink drivers in spite of what was, in general, their desire not to drink and drive. For some, offending was almost an inevitability given their limited awareness of their own consumption and the effect of alcohol on driving abilities. For others, there are different mechanisms at play bringing them to offending. The social constructions of these offenders about this behaviour were either flawed or proved less than adequate to prevent offending. There are different reasons for this, so the ways by which their constructions failed them are analysed and reported. There was also support for the finding, reported in other studies, that many drink drive offenders have, within months prior to committing the offence, been subject to one or more major lifestyle changes, such as the loss of partners, deaths of close and significant family members, moving home or loss of employment. At this point, we also need to recognise a matter of wider significance in that one

"of the secondary consequences of the failure to solve primary problems in everyday life ... is the consumption of alcohol and other drugs (meant to

inhibit the outbreak of a self-torturing conscience and to generate relief from anger, threat and fear) with a quickly developing and growing loss of self-control in a vicious circle.” (Nickel 2000 p.46)

Once these matters have been explored it is possible to set out the conclusions of this study. These confirm that most subjects had a consistent desire not to drink drive. The study has thus examined the failures of that intent and how those failures led to offending. It has shown the importance of the socially constructed ideas drivers held particularly about their drinking patterns and styles. These change frequently but are held consistently. There were other critical constructions relating to drinking, driving and the precise meaning of the legal limit. In the absence of accurate information about alcohol and the law strong reliance is given to the state the person feels. The essential characteristics of those constructions were examined, as were the mechanisms by which particular social constructions led drivers to offend. There was no support for any particular theoretical explanation of the behaviour, nor is there is one that fully accounts for drink driving. However, there are a number of clues that allow us to confirm or deny other approaches. In spite of a lack of conclusivity, there are important implications of this study for future policy, and this is the subject of the final chapter.

2 THE RESEARCH CONTEXT AND THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The international scene

The first international conference on 'Alcohol and Road Traffic' was held at Stockholm in 1950. There was no clear agreement among those attending that drinking drivers were a problem. The locus of interest of one third of the participants who came from temperance organisations was thereby expressed. Reports were taken from 23 countries of which 5 stated they had no problem and 5 others acknowledged that they had no adequate statistics. In a review of the proceedings at later conferences of the International Council on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety (ICADTS) and of developments in the field, Moskowitz (2000) reminds us that in the first part of the last century the only measure of drink driving used was intoxication. Only then could lay people recognise the "behavioural derangement" (p.37) that clearly implied impaired driving. This was the case even though Widmark, in Sweden, developed the first tests for intoxication in 1922. Always in the forefront of concern about these matters, Norway and Sweden, on the basis of Widmark's work, introduced *per se*¹ laws in 1936 and 1941 respectively. A major paper at the 1950 conference compared the clinical assessments of intoxication with measures of blood alcohol concentrations (BAC's) and found a wide disparity. Thus the medical section concentrated on methods for developing the analysis of alcohol in body fluids and one paper proposed that utilizing an enzyme 'alcohol dehydrogenase' (ADH) would give more accurate measures than the traditional wet-chemical oxidation procedure.

Once the new procedure became accepted in the field, laboratory staff could be easily trained in the new method and, with the development of an automatic analyser in the early 1960's, one person could process 100 or more specimens daily. The arrival of a simple quick analysis of a sample cleared the way for the law to set and define legal limits of alcohol for unfit driving.

The ICADTS conferences, held every two or three years since 1950, have provided the major means for the research community in this field to share their work and conclusions. It is largely this work that is featured here.

Much of the early work at later ICADTS conferences was concerned with simple psychomotor tests, where the results were capable of alternative readings. Also, as time has gone on, it has been recognised that such tests do not replicate driving. This is a much more complex activity that utilises cognitive functions to a larger extent than psychomotor functions. This understanding has had two effects, the first that cognitive functions are much more sensitive to alcohol at very low readings. Secondly the ability to compensate for diminished abilities is much less possible with cognitive functions. Over the fifty years "we can see that with increasing frequency, experimental designs and measures better reflect the information processing load of actual traffic situations" (Moskowitz 2000 p.41). Moskowitz claimed that this tuning process has not yet gone far enough and the complexity of driving in today's conditions continues to be researched. Another concern related to the tolerance developed by consistent drinkers. This is an important factor at high blood alcohol levels of around 3 times, or more, the UK legal limit.

¹ *Per se* law only requires it to be shown that the driver was above the legal limit and thus by definition unfit or impaired.

A further development is that doctors now frequently prescribe other psychotropic drugs and these are also used in self-medication, requiring constant research to understand their effects when used alone and in concert with the use of alcohol.

In her review of the developments, at succeeding conferences, in the understandings of the characteristics of drinking drivers, Evelyn Vingilis (2000) accepts that "there are few well developed theories of drinking-driving behaviours. We have fallen behind... [and] it is critical to understand.... what models can be developed to explain behaviours." (p. 60) She argued that, of her four suggested domains for study, work has been done on demographic factors. This suggests that the majority of drinking drivers are between 20 and 50 years, that around at least 80% are male and also probably from the lower socio-economic strata. Lifestyle studies, her second domain, have had their prime focus on alcohol use and whether drinking drivers are dependent or heavy consumers, yet, "many, particularly first time offenders, would be defined as moderate drinkers" (p.57). Contrary to the UK figures seen in chapter 1 she claimed that offenders also appear to have more traffic accidents than the norm and alcohol plays an important part in their social activities. The third of her four domains was personality, motivation and emotional factors, and she concluded that few associations with personality have been found. Both drinking and drink driving are affected by norms and expectations, and, though few studies have been conducted on the link with emotions, they report drinking to reduce stress as a factor. There has been little research on the fourth domain of cognitive characteristics. She concluded, "future research should focus on more theory development and utilization. Not enough research in this field is theory driven." (p.62)

One speaker at the first International Conference in 1950 questioned the participants, "Who are the drunken drivers of which we have spoken here for two days? Are they alcoholics? Are they just ordinary people? We lack the information on this point." (quoted McLean 2000 p.28) If members attending that first conference were unsure just who were the drinking drivers on the roads of developed countries, the suggestion was still made that the problem of drivers driving under the influence of alcohol might be solved if drivers were given "knowledge about alcohol metabolism and the consequences of alcohol on driving abilities." (Nickel 2000 p.45) Treatment programmes began in the United States in the 1950's and, whilst it has always been a minor part of the countermeasures to drink driving, gradually spread to other countries. This is an example of the slow acceptance of international work in the UK.

A question that occupies policy makers in many countries is whether those undertaking the rehabilitation or treatment of drinking drivers can show that their programmes are effective (see Wells-Parker et al 1995, Bartl et al 2002). The requirement is often for strict measurement, the use of control groups and comparability across different programmes. This is almost impossible to satisfy in that, first, the target groups are not always the same. For example the major target group of some treatment programmes is the multi-offender, but the young driver or drivers with high BAC readings at conviction are the subjects of other programmes. This makes comparisons between programmes nearly impossible. Whether the programmes should be group or individually centred appears, over the years, to have settled into a pragmatic solution of group programmes for the non-addicted driver but individual programmes for addicts. Again, the duration of treatment poses a further dilemma, with some addicts possibly requiring life-long assistance, but since "the early eighties, time-limited dynamic psychotherapy has ... demonstrated positive effects. This has ... influenced the development of courses ...from a 12 – 20 hour exposure to treatment within two to six weeks." (Nickel 2000 p.49) An

additional question is whether there should be an assessment procedure prior to treatment? National studies seem to point to good individual assessment enables programmes to be targeted more effectively but the results are not clear (Wells-Parker and Williams 2002). Further there is also a wide variation in the amount of legislative weight that is given to the rehabilitative procedure. When allied to the range of possible countermeasures (e.g. medical control of offenders, supervision, impoundment of vehicles, technical devices such as interlock which prevent drivers with alcohol in their breath starting the car) "there is a high degree of interaction between those factors." (p.50) Nickel argued that "there is no other way than rigorous evaluation to prove the accordance to developed standards, allow the public to understand ...help ...provide measures for the improvement" of services (p.50). There are considerable inherent difficulties in such evaluative studies (NHTSA 2001 chapter 5)

The extensive survey, conducted at Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA between 1961-1964, made considerable impact. The study collected data from 5985 drivers involved in accidents and a control group of 7500 drivers randomly selected at sites that had also been randomly selected from the distribution of accidents in the city in the previous three years. The research team also attended every accident and breath tested each driver involved in the accident. (Borkenstein et al 1964) There were two significant findings. The first has rarely been reported but the research team, from those surveyed, found "only 993 positive BACs among the cases and 834 among the controls" (p.33 McLean 2000). The finding that was both widely reported and accepted showed that, at levels of BAC above 50mg in 100 ml of blood, both involvement in and responsibility for accidents increased rapidly (Dale 1964).

One element of any review must be a recognition that throughout the car-using societies both the number and percentage of drink driver fatalities worldwide declined in the 1980's (see Beirness et al 1994 for Canada) and the reasons for this are multi-faceted including over 500 legislative changes in the USA (Hingson et al 1988).

Finding possible countermeasures has been explored by Clayton (1997). He looked at suggestions such as reducing the legal limit, enforcement strategies including Breath Alcohol Ignition Devices, sanctions against the drivers including different penalties on conviction, and sanctions against the vehicle in addition to alcohol assessment treatment and rehabilitation programmes. There are possibilities, as yet not implemented: requiring clinicians to report alcohol-impaired drivers to the relevant authority (Chang et al 1992); designated drivers; sobriety checkpoints; restricting heavy alcohol consumption (De Jong and Wallack 1993); a doctor's certificate before returning a licence (Kristenson 1982); enforcement of prohibiting service to intoxicated patrons by server training (McKnight and Streff 1994); random breath testing (Voas and Fisher 2001); alcohol sensors to detect drivers above the legal limit (Foss et al 1993); a consistent legal limit of 30 mg% in blood (Heifer 1991). Clayton's 1997 review of the options available, recognised that there is no "silver bullet", though some options may bring a reduction in deaths and accidents, but these require restrictions on all drivers. The "essential question, therefore, is the extent to which drivers will accept such restrictions..." (p.56). If these are unacceptable, he suggests that road design should be changed and public transport improved, though neither suggestion is likely to prove more acceptable.

Policy relating to drinking and driving in the UK- a case study²

The Introduction stated that travellers should be safe from danger or molestation by drivers, who had been rendered incompetent by alcohol. The 1806 Act of Parliament made it an offence for a coach or carriage driver to be “incapable of driving... or properly attending to the concerns thereof by reason of intoxication or otherwise, whereby the Safety of Passengers may be endangered”. Those concerns continued and in 1872, as a minor part of an act regulating public houses, it was made an offence for any person to be “drunk while in charge on any highway or other public place of any carriage, horse, cattle or steam engine” whether there was damage or injury or not. In 1925, ‘mechanically propelled vehicle’ was added to the above list.

Most other countries with developed modern traffic conditions have, to a greater or lesser degree, shared the concerns of the 19th Century British legislators and not considered driving to be one of those occasions when “societally sanctioned freedom from the otherwise enforceable demands that persons comply with the conventional proprieties” applies (p.89 MacAndrew and Edgerton 1969). There have been some difficulties in translating such concerns into policy and these are now discussed by tracing the development of policy in the UK. This provides a case study of a singular approach to keeping drink driving off the highways. This has been produced by the interaction between the different understandings of the nature of the behaviour and the ways that pressure groups, associated with each view, brought.

One question that exercised both the international and the UK policy-making communities related to the ways by which ‘incapable of driving’ or ‘drunk in charge’ were to be defined. Further, the methods and tests for determining just who is or is not unfit, incapable or drunk need agreement, definition and acceptance. As all legislation is a balance between competing views and to some extent a curb on people’s actions, it needs to be understood by all who might be affected. Thus, in relation to drink driving, the scales measuring the intoxication or incapacity of driving need to be widely understood, as does the actual effects of the alcohol on driving behaviour. In addition the policy community need some understanding of prevention, how to correct this unsatisfactory behaviour once it has occurred and also, in particular, to prevent individual drivers from continuing to drive whilst incapable of so doing through alcohol.

In 1928, a lecturer in forensic medicine from Sheffield University gave a lecture to the British Medical Association (BMA) entitled, “*Tests of Drunkenness in Motor Accidents*”. This was one attempt to define drunk and a pressure for reform that brought, in 1930, a change to the UK law, in that the requirement to show the driver to have been “drunk” was replaced with a need to show the driver to have been so “under the influence of drink ... as to be incapable of having proper control” and, in 1956, with “unfit through drink”. But, as there were no accurate tests for this to be determined and no clear definitions of the meaning of ‘unfit’, ‘incapable’, ‘having proper control’ or ‘drunk’, the changes only served to confuse drivers and compound the difficulties. The police, without accurate definitions, tests or measuring instruments, found it necessary to ask apprehended drivers to walk on

² Throughout this section I am indebted to LIGHT R (1994) *Criminalising the Drink Driver in understanding the historical development of the legal measures relating to drinking and driving.*

white lines, pick up small coins from the floor, repeat 'tongue twisting' statements or other idiosyncratic tests as ways of deciding if the driver was unfit to be driving.

Picking up on work reported at international conferences, in 1960 the BMA published a revised edition of *"The Relation of Alcohol to Road Accidents"* in which they argued for three changes. First, a change in the focus of UK law to make drinking and driving a per se offence would, they concluded, have a greater deterrent effect on drivers. They wanted, secondly, to see the testing of breath samples as the preferred method of determining the extent of a driver's impairment and, by being minimally invasive, felt it would be acceptable to the public. Thirdly, they argued for the BAC limit to be fixed at the level of 50mg per 100 ml of blood on the basis of the evidence available. As a result of this report, the notion of driver impairment was eventually introduced into UK legislation.

The number of fatal accidents on UK roads attributed to drivers under the influence of alcohol continued to increase year on year. This was obviously a matter of concern to some policy makers.

However, prolonged debates continued around the nature of motoring offences, the main emphases of which continue today. Are these criminal acts in the sense that theft, bodily harm, rape and murder are? The role and function of the police was also an issue, with the police arguing that, whilst they had a duty to apprehend and prosecute motoring offenders, nevertheless they could only be an effective force if the public were in sympathy with them, and motorists were consistently arguing that they were being 'persecuted' by the police. A further debating point was the nature of the effect of alcohol on functioning, for the growing body of evidence was not readily accepted by drinking motorists. Another debate concerned the nature of evidence and the method by which it was obtained - with judges being prepared to rule some 'scientific' evidence as inadmissible, sometimes on the smallest of technical grounds. The legal professions were also key elements in the debate for, however clear the scientific evidence was, many argued that they had a duty, in the UK adversarial justice system, to defend or prosecute their clients with all the means at their disposal. Much medical evidence, whether 'scientifically' grounded or not, was thus discredited, especially when doctors could readily be found to argue both for prosecution and for defence.

Once again the BMA, in the 1965 report *"The Drinking Driver"*, became the catalyst to bring a major change in the law. They argued that it was not necessary to have a clinical examination of drivers, indeed that such was a subjective process, and should be replaced with a fixed blood alcohol limit. The evidence for the level was again reviewed and support for the previous figure of 50 mg per 100 ml of blood given but, on the basis that this might catch some unimpaired drivers, the report finally recommended the level be 80 mg per 100 ml of blood. They again favoured breath testing as against blood or urine sampling as the preferred method. The Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA survey conducted between 1961-1964, made considerable impact, especially the finding that at a BAC level of more than 50 mg involvement in accidents increase exponentially. This provided "the final scientific evidence needed to link alcohol and traffic casualties." (Light 1994) Only then did the UK, in 1967, set a legal limit of alcohol in the body and bring in a per se law where the legal limit is the definition of unfit or impaired driver.

At last the UK police had both a simple method for testing those suspected of driving whilst unfit through alcohol consumption and an allied definition. However, there remained the matter of police powers to be resolved. A White Paper issued in 1965 proposed that only where the officer had grounds to suspect that the driver

had been consuming alcohol should the police be given powers either to stop drivers randomly or to stop and require a sample. After two attempts, due to the intervention of a general election, the Road Traffic Act of 1967 was passed and for the "first time in England and Wales an objective criterion had been laid down governing the relationship between alcohol consumption and driving." (Light 1994) A sample of breath was also accepted as the preferred method. The final compromise recommendation of the 1965 BMA report for a level of 80 mg per 100 ml of blood, or its equivalent of 35µg per 100 ml of breath, was accepted as the UK legal limit. This remains the UK limit in spite of the proposal, in 1988, by the European Commission that, from 1 January 1993, the "maximum legal limit for all member states shall be no more than 0.50mg per ml blood." (European Commission 1988)

In spite of this apparent clarity, uncertainties continued and the debate carried on almost without interruption. The central matters of the debate concerned - police procedures that needed to be precise to conform to different Acts of Parliament; whether the accuracy and reliability of the equipment to test a sample was adequate; whether the procedures encroached upon motorists' civil liberty against arbitrary arrest; and whether a fixed limit could apply to everyone. It was also a matter of concern as to how motorists could actually know when they were at or above the legal limit and were legally either able or unfit to drive. For there is "an automatic assumption by the general public that so long as their alcohol levels are below these limits then it is safe to drive and above these limits it is dangerous to drive. Under these circumstances it is irresponsible to give no guidance to drivers." (Denney 1997) Many of these matters continued as debating points. The 1967 Act itself was immediately effective in reducing fatal accidents but soon appeared to have lost its power. Further, so many loophole cases were escaping conviction that a review became urgent and in mid 1974 the government agreed to set up a Departmental Committee "to review the operation of the law relating to drinking and driving", which became known as the Blennerhassett enquiry.

The consequential report was, at the time, seen to be a watershed in developing legal policy in the UK. The report argued for: simplified police procedures and an evidential breath test to be the norm; retention of the legal limit at 80 mg per 100 ml of blood; police powers to require and test samples to be "unfettered"; penalties to be raised and the offence should cease to be triable on indictment; the small group of 'high risk' offenders be given an order over and above the usual penalty, requiring the offender to show that his drinking habits do not present undue danger; suggested ways that loopholes could be closed so that courts could disregard lapses from correct procedures; and finally for an increase in publicity, education in schools and research. With hindsight, and compared to other similar reports in other countries, the report was a disappointment, particularly in that the committee did not draft a bill to achieve its recommendations. Also it failed to take account of the available evidence in this country and abroad, as well as the, by then, considerable international literature. These matters weakened the impact of the report and the only immediate changes made were in the Criminal Law Act 1977, the effect of which was to bring the majority of drink-driving cases before magistrates rather than the higher courts sitting with juries. This Act also tried to bring drink-drive cases within the general law of evidence, and, after a notable case, achieved this. The police welcomed the Departmental Committee [Blennerhassett] report and worked hard to develop satisfactory testing apparatus. The government were less clear in their response, taking 6 months before they published it and a further 3 months before it was accepted as the basis for legislation. Only with a change of government, and a further report by the now Transport Research Laboratory, did the new government set about implementing

the report. After major debates about the increase in police powers, which Blennerhassett had argued should be 'unfettered', new Acts were passed in 1981 and 1982 coming into effect in 1983.

From May 1983 six main changes in the previous legislation came into effect. They were - evidential breath testing; conviction no longer depended on the police strictly complying with procedural rules; the onus fell on the defendant to prove that s/he had consumed alcohol after the driving and prior to the sample being taken; the police were given wider discretion to breath test; a power of entry was also given to the police; and special provisions for high risk offenders were introduced. There was immediate questioning of the accuracy and validity of the testing apparatus and, as a result, whilst the breath-alcohol limit had been set at 35 µg per 100 ml of breath, the Home Office guidance to the police to this day remains not to prosecute at values less than 40 µg per 100 ml of breath. Legal challenges to the use of police powers were also made. However, the number of cases going to the Divisional Courts have steadily diminished, the number of breath tests administered by the police increased, the number of convictions for drink-driving has risen to around 100,000 cases per annum, and the number of accidents causing fatalities or injuries has also steadily decreased, though there are inherent difficulties in establishing the precise facts concerning accidents (see Adams 1995).

As the 1981 and 1982 Acts were passed, the government was also producing an alcohol policy, *"Drinking Sensibly"*, which might have provided a framework in which all matters relating to alcohol consumption were to be considered and enacted. That has not happened, though it has provided health targets and influenced the relaxation in the licensing regulations. As far as drink driving is concerned, the publicity drives and special campaigns by the police prior to Christmas, that have become a tradition since 1967, have remained and a summer campaign has been added. The law, based on 1970's thinking, was again reviewed as The Road Traffic Law Review. Their report, the North report, was published in 1988. The review broadly advocated the diversion of minor offenders from the courts and increased penalties for those drivers who pay little heed to traffic law, including a new offence for those who cause fatal accidents whilst driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The North Committee's report gained much acceptance, but its approach seemed narrow and it was not until the 1991 Road Traffic Act that North's main recommendations became law. This act also gave statutory power for the introduction of rehabilitation courses for drink drive offenders.

However, the conclusion must be that, although concerns as to the legislation and policy continued to disturb the civil service, there has been no great political will to make any further changes. Light (1994) offers "some possible explanations" as "first, the drink-drive provisions have not been as effective as they might have been, due to a concentration on simple deterrence; secondly, attempts to manipulate public attitudes to drink-driving may have backfired; thirdly, the literature and state of knowledge on drink-driving is inconclusive and contradictory in several respects; fourthly, the drink-driver is not a 'suitable enemy'; and fifthly, measures such as RBT (random breath testing) and lower blood-alcohol concentrations would widen the net of the criminal justice system unacceptably." (p.156) Meanwhile, of course, in other countries different strategies were already operating (see Powell 2000 for aspects of Australian policy). At no point, it appears, have the policy makers considered what Ann Deehan calls a "public health approach" to those who are involved in criminal activities where alcohol is involved. After she left the Home Office, she has argued that offering a "mixture of advice, information and health promotional literature to the targeted individual" (p. 48) would be as effective with this population as it is in other settings. In relation to the drinking driver she believed

this would be more effective “especially if the drinking status, as dependent problematic or intoxicated, of the offender were established at the time of the offence.” (p. 52 Deehan 2001)

It appears that the debates in the UK have, over many years, concerned themselves almost entirely with the medical and legal aspects of the questions about drinking drivers. Possibly some of the reason for this has been civil service views have centred either on individual driver responsibility and deterrence or the design and safety features of our roads. There has been little desire to “give our citizens another option, rooted in the ideal of justice and the traditions of a civilized society: different punishment that recognises the requirements of a lawful order, safe communities and human dignity.” (William Bennett quoted Nickel 2000 p.46) Also there has been little co-ordination of different initiatives in relation to alcohol and no overarching policy framework within which different government departments could develop any policy, let alone a set of co-ordinated policies in contrast to, for example, the USA 1984 law (NIAA 1986). It has long been a concern of those in the UK dealing with the effects of alcohol that there is no central government responsibility for the matter. In 1987 an inter-departmental Ministerial group was set up under the Leader of the House of Commons, John Wakeham, to review government policy for combating alcohol-related problems including drink driving. The core membership consisted of ministers from 16 departments. Targets were set in the *Health of the Nation* (1992) but the national agency, Alcohol Concern, has continued to press until now for an Alcohol Policy framework (see Alcohol Concern 1997, 1999, 2000). This pressure is for a strategic plan to be developed and the setting up of a body charged with its implementation. The strategy could include objectives relating to taxation and the price of alcohol; licensing of premises and people who sell alcohol; community safety, where drinking disorder would be designed out; control of the promotion of alcohol; promoting responsible drinking for all and enhancing the support and treatment available to those in the early stages of developing an alcohol problem; resources to carry out the strategy (Alcohol Concern 1999).

One possible alternative to policies based on deterrence theory and to concerns about the nature and legalities of the offence might have been to set about developing a rational educational programme for all drivers. In no aspect of driving has this been the case. Once tested and found competent, there are no further tests until old age, motorway experience is omitted from the driving test and there is only mechanism for further skill development and testing for a few. Only recently has the written test been introduced and overhauled, leading to a new industry developing the necessary training techniques. Failures of driving that led to the commission of an offence have not required the offender to undergo further skill development where the focus has been “individual drivers incompetence to keep to rules and laws introduced for the sake of safety of communities and societies in order to re-establish competence.” (Nickel 2000 p.46) It is thus perhaps of little surprise that not even now is a requirement placed on drink-drive offenders to re-train, for participation in the DDR Scheme remains a voluntary choice of the individual offender. The UK has taken little account of the different schemes that have been developed, reported at conferences and researched internationally. The published work is so extensive that Wells-Parker and her team conducted a meta-analysis of the reports, published in 1990 and 1995. They were critical of the rigour of many studies but concluded that only two, “psychotherapy alone and AA³, had negative values” (p.917) and when those studies with better methodology were examined they suggest “a robust positive effect of remediation compared with no

³ Alcoholics Anonymous

remediation... the remediation effect on both DUI⁴ recidivism and alcohol-related crashes, in easily comprehensible terms was in the range of a 7-9% reduction. This effect was found in spite of the fact that most "no remediation" groups were not "no treatment" groups; control groups received licence sanctions often more severe than the remediation group and frequently received contact with intervention personnel either for screening or outcome monitoring purposes." (p.923) Superior effects were found when remediation was combined with other sanctions and "that inclusion of remediation was associated with larger effects on drink-driving behaviour, although licence sanctions ... improved alcohol-related traffic safety." (p.923) They also acknowledged that recidivism was a "conservative measure of program effect" and if the correction suggested by Lipsey (1992) was applied the "magnitude of the effect could approximately double." (p.925)

The research and findings in the international field have been slow to filter into policy in the UK. As one example, a working group in 1996, looking at the re-granting of suspended licenses, predicated all their work on the basis that the decision could be based on an accurate BAC reading alone. (Pharmacia and Upjohn 1996) Again the most recent UK work (Clayton 1997) reviewing these aspects of policy has been funded by the brewing industry and undertaken privately.

Recent developments

Recent European work (e.g. Skog 2001) is recognising that there are three long-established general alcohol consumption patterns and cultural styles across Europe – the spirit drinking countries of Northern Europe, beer countries of Central Europe and wine countries of Southern Europe, with different views about and expectancies of alcohol as well as patterns of drinking. Governments in Central Europe seem, in general, to be conscious of the vote-losing capacities of actions affecting the perceived drinking culture that they imagine will be unpopular. Such decisions are not taken at times close to elections. This seems to be the case in the UK political scene. This particularly limited approach within the UK, unlike the Scandinavian countries, may well be compounded by our lack of an overall alcohol policy and the split responsibilities of many civil service departments for varying aspects of policy dealing with alcohol.

The same case can also be made, across Europe, in relation to transport, where many governments have indicated intentions to produce more integrated policies. To this observer these have not resulted in such integration. As one example, within the UK there remains a split between government departments concerning responsibilities relating to transport. This led to the Home Office (Home Office 2000), not the transport department, taking the lead and publishing the December 2000 consultative paper on road traffic penalties. Though produced jointly by 3 departments, I am told, the whole review of traffic penalties has been accompanied by in-fighting between the departments. This is unnecessary and a very different situation, for example, from that which applied in states of Australia, who introduced random breath testing, with very concerted government actions co-ordinated across departments and the police.

Discussion with staff indicates that traditionally, the research section of the Department of Transport, from whom particular studies were commissioned, has undertaken traffic research in the UK. Whilst the section has moved through the

⁴ Driving Under the Influence of alcohol

process of being separated out and then 'privatised' as the Transport Research Laboratory, it remains, by ethos, the handmaiden of the, now, Department for Transport. Unlike INRETS in France, it has not been provided with sufficient routine statistics, had the independence or financial freedom to range widely across the field and produce pro-active reports that might bring international matters to the attention of policy makers. In spite of these structural matters, we do have a law that commands international respect for the automatic disqualification from driving on conviction of drink driving (Ross 1997). The UK is not alone in still echoing the major speaker, at the first Stockholm conference, that we know so little about the drinking driver and still predicate much policy on assumptions that are not necessarily evidential.

The drink driver rehabilitation scheme – Nationally

The commencement of this scheme and the place it holds in social policy has already been mentioned, in the previous chapter, but it now seems necessary to expand on the detail of how the scheme operates, from a personal perspective (but see also Mills 1991)

On Christmas Eve 1992, the Secretary of State for Transport announced (under powers granted in Road Traffic Act 1991) that an experimental rehabilitation scheme for drink drivers would commence in 1993. Only some 20 courts were selected, for the experiment, to give both a balance of town and rural areas and a geographical spread throughout the UK except Northern Ireland. The scheme was an innovative one for the UK, containing a number of unusual features. Since 1983 magistrates have had little discretion in the sentencing of drink drive offenders. They have had to disqualify the person from driving for a period of at least 12 months. In essence this scheme allowed magistrates, in the selected courts, to offer a reduction of up to 25% in the length of that disqualification from driving to an offender if s/he successfully underwent the scheme. It has been common for the maximum reduction to be given. A date by which the offender has to complete the course in order to qualify is also set. The offender has, to agree to be referred to the scheme, which requires the offender to attend a prescribed course of between 16 and 30 hours duration, pay the set fee and meet the requirements of the local scheme organiser. The government set the parameters for the fee. At the start of the scheme, they were a minimum of £50 and a maximum of £200, later increased to £250. Should the offender decide, on reflection, not to undertake the scheme the full disqualification from driving remains but this is the only result. Non-participation is not reported to the court, nor does the court have any powers to take any alternative action with the offender.

For many years magistrates have had the ability to select offenders to undertake activities for which the person's agreement in court was, and is, required. The unusual features of the DDR scheme are that, for the first time in UK policy, driving offenders had the opportunity to undertake a course of training in order not to re-offend. Also it was novel to reward successful completion of the course with a reduced disqualification from driving. Further, the scheme remains self-financing, being entirely paid for by the fees of those who choose to participate. Those fees have also to be paid prior to the commencement of the course.

Both magistrates and course providers were concerned at some of the implications of this Scheme. Requiring those who participated in the scheme to pay a course fee, locally set within national guidelines, could be seen as merely a way by which

the financially well off could reduce their disqualification time. It was either a way of paying for justice or of reducing the effects of the court's sentence. In the eyes of some magistrates, as well as of many others associated with the scheme, this would be an unjust discrimination against the poorer offenders. The perception of the level of that injustice has had, without doubt, an effect on magistrates' decisions relating to referral, indeed there is evidence that some people have not been referred to the scheme because particular magistrates felt the person could not afford it. Other magistrates have made clear to me that they saw the scheme as a way of defeating their sentencing policy. A few have felt that offenders should serve the minimum ban of 12 months and, against the guidelines, therefore increased the period of the ban so that, when reduced by attending the course, it was still 12 months. This was clearly very rough justice for anyone who chose, for whatever reason, not to attend the course. There was also considerable doubt among magistrates as to the effectiveness of the scheme. Again it was a new and different way for magistrates to think about one group of offenders and it was left to the providers of the scheme to offer training to all court officials. Magistrates, court officials and providers were given no other assistance to fulfil their key role of implementing a new policy of social justice.

Initial expectations that all those appearing in the selected courts for the relevant offences would be offered, accept and take up the scheme were quickly dissipated. The national percentages of those considered suitable by magistrates and who accepted in court to be referred to the scheme were 36% in 1995 and 42% in 1996, the only years for which the figures were published (Mills 1995 Quoted Singer 1998 p.16, Davies et al 1997 p.1). Of those low figures, the percentage of those referred to the scheme that then attended a course, was similar at 34% in 1995 and 44% in 1996. Thus Davies et al (1997) calculated that, of those convicted of drink drive offences in the selected courts, only 18% actually attended a course.

These low figures may well have been related to the Department of Transport's cautious approach to the scheme, in that as a limited experimental study there was little or no publicity given to it. Magistrates were not given any guidelines on how to use their absolute power to choose those they referred to the scheme. Nor was national advice or guidance given regarding the grounds for their decision.

At the end of the three-year trial period, the result was that not enough people had utilised the scheme for the government to feel justified in making the scheme a permanent feature. The scheme was simply extended for a further one-year period. A year later, the process within the Department was repeated but with one significant difference. Additional courts were to be allowed to join the scheme. This extension was effected largely by inviting the existing Course Organisers to nominate the court areas where they felt able to extend their work. But there was no security as to the future and no declared intention as to whether the scheme would continue, expand or cease. The result was that from the start of 1998 the scheme was available to drinking driver offenders in 176 magistrates courts throughout the country and the scheme was to continue until 1999. It was accepted that a decision would then be taken about the scheme's future, when the available options would be to make it a national scheme or close it altogether. The matter appeared to hang in the balance, for the decision was only taken and announced in late October 1999, to make the scheme a national one as from 1 January 2000. The DDR scheme would be a permanent part of the way of dealing with convicted drink drivers (Lord Whitty 2000). Once the scheme became national, the advice to magistrates is always to offer the maximum reduction. This is seen to limit the inequalities within the scheme.

The scheme was monitored and evaluated by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL). The first report of national statistics of the DDR courses provided some basic information including the age distribution and social class of those attending courses (Mills 1995). Participants were also measured on a simple Alcohol Knowledge Test at the start and finish of the course and this information was collected by and available to Course Organisers. Mills reported that participants showed a general increase in knowledge about the legal limit and an increase in awareness of safe driving limits. A battery of 7 attitudinal statements measured attitudes towards drinking and driving and 85% improved their scores during the courses. It is no part of my study to replicate this on-going evaluative work of the courses. TRL also reported (Davies and Harland 1996, Davies, et al (1997 and 1998) a dramatic reduction in the re-offending rates and this formed the background to the decision to make the scheme a national one from 1 January 2000.

The low uptake for the scheme raised concerns relating to the socio-economic status of those accepting to undertake a course. Paula Mills study (1995) looked at both age and social class and found:

Age	Percentage		Social Class	Percentage
Up to 19	2		A	2
20 – 24	10		B	10
25 – 29	15		C1	26
30 – 39	32		C2	35
40 - 49	26		D	18
50 – 59	12		E	9
60+	3			

She offered no comment on these figures. A more in depth analysis was undertaken by Davies et al (1997) using both the ACORN categories, based on post code analysis, and categories based on the occupational data of the small number interviewed. They concluded that, “the sample of attenders is biased towards people with a higher income and ... that the main reason for not going on a course was cost.” (p.10)

The referral and uptake rates slowly and gradually increased to the point at which virtually all first-time offenders appearing before magistrates’ courts were referred to the scheme.

The drink driver rehabilitation scheme – In Sheffield

Within the initial discussions, as the scheme was set up in Sheffield, it became clear that not only the court officials but also the magistrates’ leaders were very supportive of this scheme. Sheffield magistrates welcomed the opportunity to refer convicted drinking drivers to some form of help and guidance that would seek to reduce re-offending. However, there were in excess of 350 lay magistrates at that time in the city and there would inevitably be a variety of views within such a large number.

Sheffield magistrates did have concerns about the ability of financially able offenders to ‘purchase’ a reduction in the length of their disqualification from driving. This was a possible injustice within the scheme that they formally raised with the government, without affecting the nature of the scheme. Such concerns probably affected the referral decision by some magistrates. From the scheme starting and

throughout the period of this study, the fee paid by those attending courses in Sheffield was £150. This was always reduced for those students, elderly or people on state benefits, who found this an impossible figure and approached the Organiser. There was widespread relief at my decision to reduce the course fee for these groups, but this only marginally lessened the potential injustice of the scheme.

The way the scheme operated during the period of this study was that, once a referral had been agreed, the court informed 'reForm', the name under which the scheme operated in Sheffield. Each referred person was immediately sent a letter giving further information about the scheme and the dates of the next courses that were being organised. Intending participants had then only to choose the most convenient course for themselves and return a booking form to be booked on the course. That pattern of contact, with those referred by the court, has remained the same throughout. Courses have always been arranged at regular intervals and were all held at city centre venues convenient for public transport. They were usually arranged in the early evening, during some lunch breaks and also on Saturday mornings. The scheme required that the course had to provide at least 16 hours of training and this was usually broken down into 8 weekly sessions, each of 2 hours duration. Saturday morning sessions were held fortnightly and were for 4 hours. As time progressed other options were also developed.

Following discussion with the magistrates as to the nature of the course, they recognised that the course would not deal with drinking problems as such and if magistrates became aware of an alcohol addiction this was a ground for not making a referral. The design of the scheme was, and remains, to give assistance, guidance and help to convicted drinking drivers through the offender attending a course for which s/he pays and in return receives a reduction in the length of the driving disqualification. This aim has shaped the nature of the course and the way the scheme operates locally.

During the course, the early focus is on each person's drinking. Everyone keeps a daily diary of all their alcohol consumption throughout the course, for this is a reliable method with light drinkers though less reliable for heavy drinkers (Webb et al 1991). There are also exercises and discussions designed to assist everyone to have a clear understanding of their personal drinking style and pattern. There is a familiarisation exercise so that people can see what different drinks look like in the type of glasses they commonly use. Each participant examines their own drinking history and relates it to the group so that changes in it and influences upon it can be recognised. Teaching about units of alcohol, how the body absorbs, circulates and eliminates alcohol and the average times taken for these processes is given. The link between the amount of alcohol consumed and Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is explored to make the point that absorption rates vary and thus drinkers cannot be sure of being under the legal limit after having drunk 'x' units. There are exercises designed to get all participants observing and thinking about good and bad driving and opportunities to discuss the driving behaviour that concerns or irritates each one.

Exercises are undertaken to observe driving through a long lens, as it were, so that all appreciate the amount of traffic, the small tolerances that often operate, the speed of vehicles and the wide range of activities that take place on our roads by pedestrians, children, animals, and elderly people, as well as the varied situations and motivations for being there, such as professional drivers with tight deadlines, those lost, the distracted, those enjoying a pleasant drive and many others. The effect of alcohol on the central nervous system and thus on moods, cognitive

functions, physical and psychological abilities is explored in some depth. There is also input concerning the drink-driving legislation so that all are aware of its complexities, definitions and hazards. The group discusses case studies. Each person explores all their previous driving after drinking alcohol and participants establish their personal cues for the action as well as general and personal vulnerabilities to driving after drinking. It is also a requirement that each person spends time looking at the circumstances leading up to and following their offence in order that they can establish what led to and what were the implications of their offending. There are group and individual exercises by which general and personal strategies for avoiding driving with alcohol in the body are developed. Those personal strategies are subject to challenge and are improved by suggestions from the group and the leader who utilises all the material offered through drinking histories, daily diaries, personal accounts of the offence[s] and contributions to group discussions. Everyone who completes the course should have a clear, realistic and achievable action plan to avoid future driving with alcohol present.

There are few statistics for Sheffield available but the original referral rate was 52% from the Sheffield Court, rather higher than the national average (Mills 1995). Those who attended needed to be able to afford the fee and the scheme appears to have self selected more of the most affluent offenders. However, the subjective evidence, in Sheffield, is that those undertaking courses did so with one motivation only – the early return of their driving licence (See also Singer 1998). Beyond that, the reasons given for participating in the scheme were many and bore little relation to socio-economic status. The pressure to join the scheme appeared to be related to the inconvenience of not having a car, especially in relation to getting to work; having members of the family, especially if disabled or elderly, dependent upon the driver; loss of esteem at not being able to drive; loss of the pleasure of driving as well as those whose livelihoods were in some way affected by or dependent upon their having a driving licence. Those joining the scheme were of all ages from 17 to over 70 and they lived in all parts of the city. Their economic status ranged from unemployed, disabled, early retired, retired and those in work. Those in employment ranged from manual workers to professional and managerial occupations. On this scheme, those convicted of a drink driving offence came from a wide range of backgrounds and social circumstances.

The research question

The impetus for this study was working with the participants of the DDR courses operating within the city of Sheffield. All the subjects in this research were also participants in the DDR scheme. Thus all had been convicted of a drink drive offence and had accepted the opportunity to join the scheme. Since 1993, as the Course Organiser, I have worked with those people who chose to attend a course.

Such work challenged often-held stereotypical assumptions that all drink drive offenders are heavy consumers of alcohol. Yet the DDR course members' drinking appeared to range from modest even occasional consumption of alcohol to others who regularly consumed in excess of 100 units per week. Again, in the field and in most definitions current at the time, all course participants would be considered as 'problem drinkers'. Whilst all the course members recognised that their drinking had, on the occasion that had led to their conviction been problematic, most seemed to enjoy their drinking and have little or no other problem associated with it. Nevertheless the choice of sample would need to take account of the common

assumption that all drink drivers are at least heavy consumers if not dependent on alcohol.

Another assumption that these offenders were a particular sub group of an offending population seemed not to be borne out. The offenders I met came from a wide cross section of society, including many for whom this was their only offence. This was no narrow group of people with particular characteristics marking them out from the driving population at large. Those with rules which, for a variety of reasons, were set aside on one occasion contradicted the assumption that all were drivers who regularly take considered decisions to drive after consuming alcohol. Indeed, many made it clear that they did not want to be offenders and had feelings of shame or guilt at having offended. Many took that statement further and claimed that they had actively tried not to offend as drink drivers.

Challenges presented themselves to me in a number of different forms. For one of the most striking features of my early work was coming to terms with the lack of accurate knowledge held by course participants in two areas. Almost all were limited in their understanding of alcohol, how long it remains in the body and the effects it has on the human body. This was not too surprising, but the level of misunderstanding was. Of greater surprise were the inaccuracies in the recognition of the true nature of people's own drinking. The simple task of keeping a diary of daily drinking brought exclamations of surprise from so many. Not only was that level of surprise registered about their own drinking but also about the nature of the rest of the group's drinking. Course members had a common held assumption that 'everyone' drank on more or less the same number of days, drank about the same amount and for the same motives. It was a surprise to find that others were very different as drinkers. Thus many arrived at the second or third session of a course commenting that, when they had recognised their drinking compared to the group, they had decided to alter their drinking.

From the start of the scheme, simple measures were used to determine the nature of the dependency on alcohol of those we met. Initially the Michigan Alcohol Screening Test (MAST) was the tool but replaced by the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) of the World Health Organisation (WHO) once it became available. MAST scores were not kept once AUDIT was in use.

It was no surprise to discover that almost all assumed that their driving was of good quality, safe and skilled. How that judgement was arrived at was, I suspected, a matter of great variation.

From the start of the DDR courses, everyone who participated had to understand and come to terms with the complexity of the legislation governing this aspect of behaviour, the subtle nuances of 'unfit to drive' and 'being in charge' and thus how easily people can become drink drive offenders. This raised important questions about the public policies, and the lack of rational bases for this was soon apparent.

There are many questions raised in the above about the intentions, expectancies, social constructions and actual behaviour of drinking drivers. The accounts of course members as I listened to and reflected upon them made me question how their personal rules had come to be set-aside on the particular occasion of their offence. As the number of accounts increased would it be possible to group the accounts into 'categories of circumstances that set aside the usual practice'? On the surface it appeared as if situations such as an "emergency situation", or a "relationship obligation", or even "ignorance", or "out of emotional balance" might have meaning.

Such a straightforward categorisation was precipitate and served only to raise further questions. For example, how prevalent and all embracing were these categories, or were there some others not yet perceived by me? Or again, should there be a categorisation based on entirely different criteria, such as amount of drinking and length of drinking history, as in other research? Furthermore, in what manner and with what strength did these existing categories, such as quantity of alcohol drunk with number of offences, link to each other, if at all? What was the direction of such linkages? Again, how did they link to the notion of 'risk taking'? What significance did the phrase 'I just didn't think' have, and could this in any sense be said to be explanatory? The longer or greater the reflection, the more questions that begged to be explored. Thus this study needed to focus upon the unique sample of those who participated in the DDR scheme in Sheffield and to explore the social constructions of these drink-drivers and ask them for their explanations of their behaviour.

This research explored with the subjects of this study the following major factors. First the extent to which the construction of 'normal drinking' by these subjects encapsulated their entire alcohol consumption and how any additional alcohol drinking was considered. It was also necessary to understand whether the drinking was seen as a leisure and social activity, and was thus an activity largely accepted for itself and not considered in any depth nor examined in detail. Course members' accounts of their drinking appeared to indicate that drinking followed a pattern. Would such patterns provide a more effective tool for analysis than the blood alcohol reading in common use in research studies, in policy and in legislation? Would such patterns have a regular consistency and continue over long periods of time or change frequently? What factors would bring any such change? How did any such patterns relate to the constructions people had of themselves as drinkers?

The second major area of exploration was the constructions these subjects had of themselves as drivers and how those constructions related to their driving. How would the declared interests in cars, owning and driving them be reflected in the use made of their vehicles? Would this show a marked difference from the utilitarian use most people make of their cars?

A further area of examination was the intention or otherwise these subjects had of conforming to the drink drive law or not. If, as seemed possible, the majority intended to conform, what was the nature of the personal rules about not driving after drinking they had developed for themselves? On what knowledge base had such rules been prepared? Had the complexity of the knowledge bases relating to alcohol and its effects, the time taken to expel alcohol from the body, the law, the nature of the offence and the possible future sentence been utilised?

Not only the personal rules people constructed, but also the decision to drive after drinking, may have been influenced by a person's knowledge base or had other factors affected that decision. A further consideration was whether the decision to drive, often in effect overriding personal rules, was taken with deliberation, or had other factors set aside or overrode those rules. Within those factors, what was the extent to which these convicted drink drinkers believed that there was only a limited chance of being caught? According to other studies a high proportion of male drink drivers are single or recently separated and facing emotional turmoil. How important is that finding, would it be replicated in this sample of drivers and does this mean that these offenders are "mid way between what one would expect from a criminal group and non-offenders?" (personal communication Martin, 1995)

Further questions relate to the theoretical framework in which to consider the actions of these drinking drivers. Is there a single explanatory theory that will enable us to understand this phenomenon and thus to predict who are those likely to be offenders in the future? If this is the case, there will be strong evidence for the direction of future policy and the ways by which driving whilst under the influence of alcohol can be prevented. If, on the other hand, the material gathered from this small sample of drinking drivers is not capable of being understood or explained by a single theory, what will be the more diverse implications for future policy initiatives?

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The challenge of the many questions with which I had been presented had to be faced. In essence they asked how people came to be convicted drink drivers. This was perhaps another way of asking about the perceived causes of drink driving. The review of the literature offers many studies that have taken groups of drink drivers and tried to quantify, analyse and characterise them with ever increasingly sophisticated methods. Many studies have attempted to isolate the predictive power of specific items. But they did not give me understanding of how individuals come to act. Such studies failed to answer my deepest questions. I recognised that, in this study, I needed to guard against any attempt to objectify the subjects or the process of the study.

I needed to utilise a different method whereby individual offenders and I met together in order to try to understand the person's action. Such a method has difficulties for ultimately no one can get into the mind or self of another. Further one party's empathy may be a hindrance because it may lead to a confident, assured 'understanding' that cannot in fact exist. Goffman has taught us that we all make presentations of ourselves, which he calls fabrication or self-deception when it is recognised or known about (Goffman 1974). Also the participants and the situation affect each presentation. It needs to be understood that the nature of the interaction is a reflexive one with the limitation that each participant reflects both something of themselves and something of what they understand of the other person.

Another important question relates to the significance of the word 'methods'. Phillips (1971) uses the terms "data-collection techniques" and "data-collection procedures". Qualitative techniques, such as participant observation, written accounts, diaries, discussions or unstructured interviews seek to unravel the subjective meanings that people give to their experiences. As such, these approaches are not the objective study of one person by another, the researcher, but a truly hermeneutic approach that subjectively tries to grasp the other person's point of view and so in some sense to claim understanding of him. If "methods are mere instruments designed to identify and analyse the obdurate character of the empirical world" (Blumer 1970) they give a mechanistic tone to research enquiry. Rather, Bryman and Burgess (1994), in their review of qualitative research practice, express the view that "qualitative research cannot be reduced to particular techniques nor to set stages, but rather that a dynamic process is involved which links together problems, theories and methods." (p.2) This recognises that research is a dynamic process with many strands to it, and that has an inevitable messiness about it. This appears to be the experience of those who have written about their qualitative research methods in some detail (see as one example Richards and Richards 1994). It is this understanding that underpins this study.

One major method, which undertakes such a study of ordinary experiences and which also stresses the interplay between data collection and the development of theory, is the Grounded Theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967, Glaser 1968, Turner 1981). This approach recognises that analysis is not about quantifying data but is a process of interpretation that discovers concepts and relationships and organises these into a theoretical explanatory scheme. (Strauss and Corbin 1998) Thus grounded theory is the discovery of theory from data that has been systematically obtained and analysed through a process of initial reflection that goes alongside the data collection. The analytical process then continues through comparative analyses that ensure that the evidence is accurate through verification

of other material accounts internal to the study. If the generality of a fact can be established, empirical generalisations will result. On the other hand considerable care and attention needs to be given to those accounts that appear to be different from the generality. If they fail to fit into any classificatory scheme how and why this is must be questioned. As Glaser and Strauss claim, the root sources of all theory development are the sensitive insights of the observer. These insights may occur long after the work is finished when the study is being reviewed. Whenever such insights occur they need to be transferred to categories, which fit the data, properties and hypotheses. A category may need relating to any subcategories through statements showing their relatedness.

The researcher also needs to look for cues in the data that denote how major categories relate to one another. Out of these well developed groupings, theory develops through systematically interrelating the categories by means of statements of relationship, which form a theoretical framework that explains some relevant phenomenon. Such theory is grounded because it is derived from data and then illustrated by characteristic examples of the data. Generating grounded theory cannot be divorced from the process by which it is generated. As Strauss and Corbin (1998) make clear the researcher's awareness of that process and the ability to make it clear are essential elements of theory building. Rather using comparative analysis puts emphasis on theory as a process of generating grounded theory but the form in which it is presented can be independent of the process. In another sense such theory is what the researcher *knows systematically* (Glaser and Strauss 1967) about her/his data. This is not the same as a conviction that the perspectives and meanings of the subjects are understood. This requires that the researcher is both immersed with the subjects in the data and yet detached from that social world. The approach is thus attempting, through grappling with understanding the actions and behaviour of other human beings in all their complexity, to discover if there are comments, understandings or insights that are common and what general categories or concepts might be derived through the process. This addresses matters of reliability and validity in general. In particular they are discussed when dealing with the use of the in depth interview and choosing the sample to interview.

In hindsight it was very important for this study that I was not made aware of Matza's work on drift theory and techniques of neutralisation (Sykes and Matza 1957) for I identified all of his techniques of neutralisation in the responses of those I interviewed. He identified five techniques: to deny responsibility as a victim of circumstance; to deny that injury or harm had been done; to deny that in the circumstances the act had been wrong; to see the 'condemners' (the police for my respondents) as hypocrites or acting out of personal motives; to appeal to higher authorities such as responsibilities to family or friends. However, not being aware of the work I could not look for his categories and thus skew my own analysis.

Qualitative research cannot be forced into the standard canons of scientific enquiry relating to significance, generalisability, consistency, reproducibility, precision and verification as if into a straightjacket. Social phenomena cannot be reproduced exactly, as if in laboratory conditions, but have their own inherent unique validity. The process by which the data is gathered, and its consistent use, gives indications as to the reliability of the material. But the research process is more than the gathering of data. It is concerned with the codifying and analysis of that data. It is here that the underlying principles of the canons need to be thought through with imagination and their re-interpretation applied with rigour for only so can the reliability and validity of the analysis become clear. (Strauss and Corbin 1998)

Using interviews

There were not many ways of undertaking the data collection in order to understand personal accounts of any occasions of driving after drinking. In the context of the remedial courses I was providing individuals had given accounts of their offence. It was these accounts, in particular, that raised so many questions for me. Whilst this provided the context for this study it also raised issues about my different roles. These needed to be resolved as far as that was possible. Initially I regretted that the medium in which these stories had been given was not suitable for their recording and subsequent analysis. Practically it would have been impossible to record the stories, comments from other group members, and noted the voice inflection, body posture and language of both reporters and other group members. It would not have been possible to use every course members' story had they all been recorded and it would have been certain that I would have used those I considered interesting, unusual, raised a question for me or made a point or a challenge. It would have been either a covert method and as such unsuitable or would have diverted the giving of the account from the rationale within the remedial course to one of research.

Using any of the material gained from the remedial course would have compromised the whole issue of my professional role with these people. They had been convicted in court, offered a course, about which they knew almost nothing, received letters from me, paid me money (whether for me or someone else few knew), turned up on a due date and met me, and then participated in 16 hours of work with me which I controlled and directed. I alone had the power to offer the magic certificate that would release the driving licence earlier than otherwise. I had to accept and understand that this was the context of the relationship between us and was my professional role within it. However relaxed and informal I made the course sessions would not alter the personal reality of how each course member perceived, understood and reacted to these matters. To have turned this relationship into 'research' would have traduced one if not both purposes. Using material gained in this way on the course was not an option I could pursue although interesting material, that appeared different from anything I had expected, was thereby lost.

It was for these reasons that I chose to interview, in some depth, a sample of those people whose accounts I had heard, as the major way of collecting data about their experience of drink driving. Whilst this method could not overcome the professional bias issues, it separated the research element from the course. It also gave each person the opportunity freely to choose to participate or not. The method required that I sample a proportion of those I had met, worked with and whose stories I had heard. I felt that such a sampling should be based on criteria that had nothing to do with the personal story produced on the course. Only so could I ensure that the people interviewed were not chosen to fit some scheme already formed in the recesses of my mind. This again would have nullified the whole process.

Separately interviewing each person participating in the research also changed the context of the powerful position I held, for no one was invited to participate in a research interview until the certificate, for which he attended the course, had been given. If Elias is correct that power is always a matter of relationships and are "formed by the changing historical network of interdependencies between individuals... influenced by the fluctuating balances of power" (Burkitt 1991 p. 163) then meeting in a new context offered the possibility of a different relationship developing between us.

Interviews, such I intended to conduct, may be variously structured or not and, in the sense in which those terms are normally used, I wanted to use in depth, 'long', open-ended interviews using only a simple framework. Their purpose was to hear the accounts of the person's driving after drinking in all its complexity and to put that account into the context of the person's drinking, driving and thinking about drink driving. I also needed the space to be able to follow up, clarify and, if necessary, challenge the account until it was as clear as possible to me. This precluded the structured interview, where specific questions would be designed and asked in order to elicit a response even though that response would not be structured. In-depth interviews, in one sense, do not fully answer the question of validity in general, for the inference on which an account is based may be false. Such might be the case if, for example, it was felt that the police were 'out to get me'. That may, of course, be the case and there would be no way the researcher would know. What is important is the construction of such a response. For such interviews are a method in which the subjects are as released as possible to state clearly their feelings and understanding of their actions and this content is valid for that person. This is of the essence of validity. Yet there has to be recognition of the positions of the symbolic interactionists who claim that identity and self are the result of the process of seeing yourself as others see you and the roles that are played in that process.

Choosing those to interview

A major decision related to the selection of people to be interviewed. The size of the sample and the criteria on which it was to be selected and recruited had to be determined. It appeared that a sample size of 50 would be the maximum manageable number within the context of this project and the time available. This would, I felt give an adequate number to address matters of validity. Precise, clear and rigidly operated selection criteria are always important. But it would be doubly so in this study in order to overcome any personal bias in my professional role as the DDR course provider. In that role I had already heard descriptions from the participants of their understanding of how they came to offend and I felt I had to be extremely sensitive in ensuring that I did not choose to interview people whose stories interested me or seemed to support any ideas I had.

The choice of a particular level of drinking provided the chosen parameter. BAC at the time of the offence was a frequently used defining criterion in other studies (Wieczorek et al 1992a). It has the disadvantage of using a one-off measure to identify a drinking level, which may bear little relation to a person's usual drinking. I had the benefit of being aware of 6-8 weeks drinking recorded in daily drinking diaries. To use the self recorded weekly drinking as the basis of selection for interview would give a more balanced perspective of usual drinking for the person. But I needed to appreciate that choosing it did not invest the measure with significance. Any more than, for example, choosing people who drove 30,000 miles per annum or drove a particular make of car. The choice presumed that quantity of alcohol consumed each week was a significant indicator and provided a clue to the understanding of the drink drive behaviour but this may not be the case. With this awareness in mind, the wise choice seemed to be to select the sample on the basis of their weekly recorded drinking and this met the criterion of avoiding selection on any ground relating to a person's story.

A number of filters are in operation selecting those drink drivers who participate in the DDR scheme. Clearly not all those who drive whilst under the influence of alcohol are apprehended by the police and charged with an offence. So, within

those interviewed, there was, what many of them would call, the lottery of police detection, apprehension and prosecution. Many attendees felt that, whilst they were correctly convicted, it was special or unusual police activity - or worse, that someone had alerted the police, that brought them to prosecution (note Sykes and Matza 1957). Also those referred to the scheme at the start seemed to over represent particular postcode areas of the city. However, to have resolved the questions inherent in these two filters would have meant embarking upon a different study relating, in essence, to policing practices. It was important, to maintain consistency with my chosen method, not to seek to map the distribution of offenders geographically, socially, economically or in any other way for this would have dealt with different questions.

The operation of filters was seen in Sheffield, by the low attendance of those who had appeared in court at a course. Instead of the anticipated 350, only 90 people attended in 1993-94 and 91 the following year, a very small percentage of those appearing in court. One of the reasons was that, once in court, the magistrates had a choice as to whether or not to refer and, at the start, referred only about half of all the offenders. Further the offenders who were referred also had a choice as to whether they should accept the referral and join a DDR course. It was a possible study to examine the reasons and determine their strength. At the time I was dealing with all the referrals and meeting all those who attended courses in Sheffield, so I was aware of those who attended and had some information as to their reasons for attendance. Whilst some people did not attend because of the costs (Davies et al 1997), others who attended borrowed, went into debt or had severe financial difficulties. Other attendees had many fears of what the course might do and the issues they might have to face about themselves and presumably the same fears were replicated in those who did not attend. Another study by Singer (1998) showed that many of his respondents claimed that it was too difficult to get to the venues. We met in the city centre yet some attendees faced considerable journey times and travel difficulties in order to attend. Whatever the reasons for the low figures, which were replicated in other parts of the country, it was not part of this study to explore this dimension.

It was easy to determine that the sample should consist of men only. In the UK, at that time, about 8% of convicted drink drivers were women and a comparable number were being referred to the DDR scheme by the court and attending courses. To select 4 women as a part of the sample would have been too small a number to tell us anything significant about how women approach the matter of driving under the influence of alcohol, and would have reduced the number of male participants. There seemed to be no logical reason to include such a limited number and I decided that the wisest action would be to recruit only men to the sample.

In view of the practical difficulties involved and the nature of this study I decided that it was not possible to choose, select and assemble a control group whose findings could be compared with the study group. This reinforced the thrust of this study as an ethnographic study.

Although no formal analysis was undertaken, it was quickly clear to me that those attending the courses came from a wide cross section of drivers. They were of all adults but had no other defining common characteristics that I could recognise. Their stated fundamental motivations for attending the course were to reduce the length of time away from driving, which meant a return to a full earning capability for some, a reduction in personal or family inconvenience for others, a lessening of the felt 'shame' in not having a driving licence and just a simple desire to once again have the freedom to 'drive my car'. Self-selected participants they might be but, on

the face of it, they appeared to range across all sections of society. On the evidence available, there seemed no way by which this group of people, who each attended a DDR course, could be considered typical or not of the population of drinking drivers. This study could only be an examination of the accounts of the chosen sample and could not claim to be in any way representative of all drinking drivers or even of all convicted drink drivers.

The researcher

A necessary precondition of engaging with a research project is for the researcher to be located and grounded as precisely and accurately as possible. Self understanding is important. This also enables the reader to understand some of the researcher's background, motivation, philosophy and potential personal biases. Some of this was provided in the preface to this study. I recognised that my own background, in relation to alcohol consumption, was different from most of those interviewed. This could limit my sympathetic listening and provide blinkers to understanding different experiences. On some courses my confirmation of myself as a modest but regular drinker was always accepted without further comment. So my background and course experience might enable me, as researcher, to escape some of the assumptions that drinkers may hold and not question, and also make salient some of my own prejudices.

As researcher I would hear accounts of drinking and lifestyles that were not in my personal experience. This could result in a lack of appreciation on my part but it might avoid my making assumptions on the basis of social status or that 'I had been there and done that'.

The subjects of this study had completed a DDR course where, when personal drinking was discussed the positive, enjoyable benefits were brought out balancing lists of negative consequences usually obtained from the group. It was never part of the course to be anti alcohol or the personal styles of drinking provided there. I hoped that these aspects of my personal position as DDR provider would be retained when we met in the context of a research interview.

I also brought to this study my practice as a counsellor. Counselling and its cognates are all embracing terms. Trained counsellors have many different aspects to their skills, some of which may be shared requirements with research interviewers. My core training, developed skill and experience was in accepting each person without prima facie judgements about them, their personalities or the story they presented; then in creating an atmosphere in which people felt able to say what they wanted; further to listen accurately to people, accepting their story and feeding back my understanding of what I had heard in order to check out its accuracy. I had been trained to work with 'where the client is' and be client led in the further pursuance of the object of the interview. In the interviews for this study I had only the broadest of frames seeking to locate the person as a drinker, as a driver and listen to how he had come to offend. I was not required to set a 'professional judgement' over against the client's understanding. In the past the few occasions when this was required of me, my 'judgement' had been the subject of considerable discussion with and acceptance by the client. This project also required; that people were enabled to give their account and have it accepted but tested. Thus I felt able in the interviews to be relaxed and listen in a flexible, not preplanned or controlled, way and to let the account as offered speak to me. As a trained and skilled listener, believing I could meet this criterion, it was natural for me

to want to explore these matters by examining, through the medium of an in-depth interview, the subjects' constructions about their behaviour and what sense they made of the experience of driving whilst under the influence of alcohol. This somewhat natural reaction of mine has, I recognise, structured this study in important ways.

I believed I had a sound working knowledge of the field of alcohol studies, but my theoretical understandings were proving inadequate to account for drink driving behaviour. So this study was not going to take accepted theory and test it. Rather, I would seek explanations from those who were most involved. It was thus to be an ethnographic study and one which might offer some pointers to develop either our theoretical understanding or, at least, to policy changes that might prove more effective in preventing further offences.

On reflection, I felt my own pathway had things to commend it – a very 'flat' view of alcohol as a child, awareness and a questioning when I first came across drinkers but a clear rejection of a total abstinence position. This was followed by a choice to consume alcohol in a way and to an extent that I found, and find, enjoyable. Then to have worked with and gained some understanding of dependent drinkers was, I felt, an added strength in that I had no areas of personal behaviour that led me to a 'there-but-for-...' feeling.

I was very aware that the interpretation of the material I obtained would be a one through my own peculiar eyes of which I needed to be aware. I can only be described as a white, English, middle class, faith professing, professional person. I had a very particular personal experience and entrenched ways of interviewing providing inevitable blinkers. I had to recognise that my approaches to meeting people in one to one interviews were shaped by some years of pastoral experience, therapeutic relationships and the need to be alert to, recognise and respond to emotional pain, in whatever way that manifested itself. How such a developed way of working and integral parts of myself might impact upon and influence the responses from the interviewees I would not know. As an example, I found myself envious of the deep and lasting friendships and bonding that many subjects had with people they had grown up with – unlike myself, who had moved from place to place very frequently. As already recognised this study would have other limitations because I had worked with all those I was to interview in the context of a DDR course. Through that contact we had developed our own understandings and expectations of each other and some form of relationship. Whilst I might seek to be aware of those relationships I could not be aware, far less take account of any verbal, cognitive or emotional repertoires on the part of those interviewed. It would be a limitation that all might have strong perceptions of what they felt I wanted to hear and to have given that to me.

Other approaches

One alternative approach might have used an Analytic Induction method, where some definition of the problem or issue is the starting point for examining a number of cases and formulating a possible explanation. Further cases are then examined to see if they fit with the explanation and where there is a lack of fit in any case to reformulate the hypothesis to take account of any discrepancy as is the process in Deviant Case Analysis. This process continues until no case that does not fit the reformulated hypothesis remains. This is clearly a demanding process in which any case that is inconsistent with a hypothesis requires a return to the field. One major problem to using this method, in this study, was that it was not possible to

accurately describe a 'problem' in simple concrete terms. Rather there were many diffuse strands that needed to be understood and brought together. It also seemed doubtful if the interviewees would be willing to sustain this process. Furthermore this method appears to be predicated on a mechanistic, socially structured view of human beings where regularity and consistency are the hallmarks. It is likely to operate at a high level of general abstraction, where the particularities and peculiarities of individuals have been generalised out. In its pure form it is not frequently used though some would claim that, in their research, there has been an interplay and adjustment between the data collection and hypothesis formulation until a fit is obtained (Mason 1994).

Two alternative methods of collecting accounts of drinking and driving would have been to get people to write the account or to use a postal questionnaire thus avoiding, in both cases, the necessity for and expense of an interview, for participant and researcher. Both methods would have allowed a larger sample to be chosen and to approach a wider group than those who had attended a course. The danger in choosing a larger sample and asking them to write an account was that this could have been seen as an integral part of the course rather than a research project. Delaying it until the course was past would have probably had a low response rate. Completing a questionnaire would have used an entirely different method and implied using a wider group. This did not seem wise. It would have given two samples of drink drive offenders and that would only have been useful if they were to be compared. This was not acceptable for 'truth' as an aim was not possible to achieve, only understanding of the accounts given me.

There were further grounds for this conclusion in that both these methods rely on written explanations of what was required and not all course members were comfortable writing. The method also required subjects to be organised and disciplined. It was likely to produce a very limited and skewed response. Any questionnaire method would not give respondents an opportunity to give an account of their offence and its circumstance. Both methods would be time consuming and costly. Practically, it had proved very difficult to contact those referred to the scheme, but who chose not to attend. Post was the only way, for no telephone numbers were available, and random calling from the telephone directory proved to be very time consuming and provided only a low contact rate. The non-attendees had not responded to mailed correspondence to participate in the scheme and it did not seem viable to include them in this study. Thus both methods were considered and rejected.

Research methods

My purpose was to explore with offenders how they had come to offend, using an interview to obtain the basic data to be analysed. However, there were dilemmas inherent in this method. The population from which my sample would be selected was a group of people, whose drink driving had been observed. They had been taken to court, defined as offenders and sentenced. They had agreed to be referred to the DDR scheme and chosen to pay the fee and attend. To this extent they were not representative of all drink drivers, nor even of convicted drink drivers. To have attempted to correct any biases or to have examined the exact nature of their lack of representation would have changed the nature of this research and led to a different study.

Attending a DDR course involved, for all the subjects of this study, a relationship with me as the group facilitator and course designer, in order to obtain a certificate

that I had the sole power to grant or refuse. It was inevitable that those who attended would have some feelings about the process. Thus it was necessary to separate and distinguish matters as clearly as possible. I felt it was required of me to address this matter by, first, talking about the research and giving an explanation of the research to every course group. I explained that as they had been exposed to new knowledge and understandings so I also faced new understandings about them and about drink drivers in general.

Also all members were told that some, who met unannounced criteria, could be approached and their assistance in giving me one interview would be appreciated. Refusal was equally acceptable and carried no penalties. It was also made clear that no fee for the interview would be paid and that the purpose of the interview was research and had no relationship to their reason for attending the course and could not affect the early return of their driving licence. To assist changing the power relationship between us, it was then critical to delay inviting anyone until the course was over, the certificate had been awarded and my powerful role was ended. The principle was established that people would not be invited for interview immediately after completing the course. Interviews would be held at least some weeks after each subject ended the course. The two procedures were distinct and separate processes and it seemed wise to isolate them as much as possible for only so could it be possible for people to be as free as possible to tell their stories.

It would have been possible to make an entirely random selection of those who attended courses and invite them for interview. But so many studies had samples of 'alcoholics' or 'heavy drinkers' as subjects. Other studies had examined subjects on the basis of their BAC reading at the time of their offence (Wieczorek et al 1992a). It seemed necessary to place this study within the research field.

During attendance at the course spanning 8 weeks participants were required to keep a daily diary of drinking (Webb et al 1991). Each diary was discussed within the group and no judgmental comments were made, in order to support the objective of everyone being open, accurate and honest about their drinking. The stated purpose of keeping the diaries was to assist people to understand their own drinking behaviour. The only comments made about them attempted to elicit understandings of how any changes had occurred and why. To select people with levels of regular alcohol consumption in excess of 50 units per week that is recognised, within the alcohol field, as heavy drinking (see O'Connor 1978). Such a choice would avoid any charge that the study had selected light drinkers and had no relevance to the majority of heavy drinking drink drivers. The association between such a level of drinking, always referred to as 'heavy', and the problems such drinkers are perceived to have has already been referred to, but what this study tried to achieve was to understand what constructions the drinkers had of both matters, and what link if any they perceived between them. The cut off point of 50 UK units was also chosen because and it seemed to be the highest cut off point that would produce a realistic sample within a reasonable time. In fact, due to the small number who attended the courses in each of the first two years, it was difficult to find sufficient numbers regularly drinking 50 units a week and insufficient potential interviewees would have been available so a lower limit was chosen. The chosen criterion became drinking 40 or more units per week.

No work was undertaken to establish just what percentages of course attendees drank at what levels, largely because such a figure gave so little information as to lead to very limited conclusions. Such a concentration on quantity consumed per week gave no indication of the rich variety of ways of drinking, the feelings

surrounding it and the constructions people held about it. It was these that were of interest and the interview would seek to explore.

There were some who claimed and recorded only irregular or occasional drinking sessions. On these occasions people might have consumed either modest or excessive amounts of alcohol. To have selected, as the sample to be interviewed, people with only occasional drinking of modest amounts would have left this study out of touch with the vast majority of drinking men and of convicted drinking drivers. The results of such a study would not have been comparable with those of the mainstream of studies in this field, though these usually rely on the BAC reading at the time of the offence. In their meta analysis of the association of alcohol and social or health harms Rehm et al (2003) place drinkers of 40 units in their second category of risk. This also highlights the methodological pitfalls inherent in using a drinking measure as a tool of selection (Adams 1995). But selecting a drinking figure of 40 units a week reduced the possibility that those in the sample were likely to be occasional or irregular drinkers, was significant in relation to positive or negative experiences of drinking (Mäkelä and Mustonen 2000) and also reduced any bias due to being selected for drinking below this level and having chosen to attend the scheme. Whether they were representative of drink drivers in any way was not a concern of this study and not established.

One other criterion was adopted for the selection of a part of this sample. In the selection of later members of the sample it had become clear that some people were multiple offenders. Where I was aware of this I chose a multiple as against a single offender to be a member of the sample.

Thus, in summary, the chosen method was to conduct in depth interviews with 50 convicted drink drivers, all of whom had chosen to attend a rehabilitation course to reduce the length of their driving disqualification. All recorded drinking levels in excess of 40 UK units per week. Only 48 of the interviews were finally able to be analysed fully due to the technical failure of the recording equipment.

To examine the viability of this chosen method, assess my interviewing technique and whether adequate material was obtained, it was decided to run a pilot study of 3 interviews. As indicated above, I felt that heavy drinkers were likely to pose the sharpest questions and offer the most fruitful material. It was important to choose from this group for the initial pilot interviews⁵.

The format adopted for these interviews was both simple and, within the confines of an exploratory responsive style, standard. It was also necessary, I felt, to begin each interview, which was a re-acquaintance, by spelling out my changed role and function and seeking to establish a different rapport with each person as well as addressing the ethical issues to be resolved. The ethical issues were particularly sharp in this study for as researcher I had a previous role with the interviewees. So each interview continued with a reminder that this was a research interview, under the direction of the University of Sheffield. As such it had no relationship with their attendance at the course or, if it had not been returned, the return of their driving licence. I spelt out the nature of the research and the importance of listening to people's stories as the chosen method. All were assured that the interview remained confidential to me. Any interview material would be given a number and only I could relate that to any individual. No one at the University would know or be able to trace anyone. Any reference in any written thesis would be anonymous. Each was asked if the interview could be recorded and a typed copy made by me,

⁵ For the details of the selection see Appendix 1.

or a trained transcriber, who would not have any personal information. The right to stop if the person so chose was also given.

When the person was comfortable with these issues, the recorder was switched on and people were asked about their drinking history starting from the first drink they could remember having. Once this was completed the same process was adopted regarding their driving. Once this was up to date they were asked about their understanding of the link between alcohol and driving. This was followed by a request to tell me about the circumstances of how they came to offend and what the implications of the conviction had been for them. The primary focus at this point was the events, thoughts, feelings and understandings prior to the decision to drive. I asked if there had been other drink drive offences, for I was not routinely made aware of these. If there had been other repeat offences these were also considered in the same way and the way their understanding of drink driving, if any, had changed after the previous offence was explored. Finally, they were invited to comment upon the rehabilitation scheme, the course they had undertaken and any of the elements of it that they had found to be useful.

The three pilot interviews were typed up, the personal identifying features changed and the texts discussed with my supervisor. It was agreed that the format chosen was acceptable and should provide the information the project required. The same mechanism applied in the selection, invitation to participate, assurance of confidentiality and making the arrangements for interviews for the remainder of the interviews. Potential participants were invited and some refused, others expressed little interest or made excuse and were not pursued, others did not reply. Some 10% of potential interviewees were not approached because they had died, were in hospital or seriously ill. Also, through a change of address, the letters of invitation were returned by the post office for about 20% of those who were approached. Although no full record was made of those who did not respond or were unable to participate in the study some 69% of those originally considered did not participate. This rate improved with time but I estimate that only some 50% of those considered suitable were interviewed. I accepted this response rate and did not make continuing further contacts as the concern of this study was to meet with and reflect on the stories of 50 people, and was not based on the premise that those interviewed were a representative sample of drink drivers or of those who attended a rehabilitation course.

In the remainder of the interviews the question of feedback was addressed and people were offered to be shown references to themselves in the final report, the opportunity to be informed and discuss these with myself or have a meeting with all interviewees arranged so that the general conclusions could be given. None were interested in such feedback though three said they 'might' attend a meeting if one were organised and some asked how feasible it might be to see the whole thesis.

Data analysis

The choices made about the data collection in some way prescribe the methods of data analysis. Part of my argument is that this is a difficult and untidy area in which there are few right answers and certainly no single choice of a method completely clarifies both the nature of the analysis and the many questions that beg for examination. As the Richards (1994) made clear in their account of starting to use computers in a research project, there are the purposes of coding material. One such purpose is to code-and-retrieve in order to handle and analyse the material to

hand. A narrow indexing may provide no more than blinkers through which to view the material and sift it or it may provide an expanding hierarchy of connections between different categories. The other purpose of coding is to support the linking of data with the development of theory and the testing of those links. They also made the point that categorising in these ways may be either restricting or liberating for there is a tension between these tasks and an ever-present possibility that meaning and depth will be lost in the coding process. There will be differences in the amount and quality of the material gained from the interviews but this may not lessen the richness of the material for the building of theory, for it will be in the studying of the individual accounts in their context that will provide understandings that may have some general applicability.

It is an untidy process that yet produces a firm requirement upon the researcher to be both reflective upon the progress of the work and the processes that s/he is undertaking, rigorous in understanding the material to hand and systematic in its exploration. The limitation is that, whilst such a study produces concepts, these are ideals that cannot be fully reached. The researcher is seeking to participate in a process of understanding that can never be realised for neither of the participants knows themselves in any ultimate sense, and thus the subject cannot fully present himself for that will be constrained by the process itself and the presentation of the researcher. Yet the requirement is, above all else, to be true to the subjects of the research who have provided the material for examination. For there is never one authoritative or correct interpretation but many, so exposition and interpretation are linked. (Dawe 1979)

As with the pilot interviews a transcription was made of each interview— the majority by myself, but a professional typist trained for this work was used for about one third of the interviews. If I undertook the transcription myself it was done as soon as possible and usually before the next interview took place. If this was not practically possible the tape was listened to and a simple summary with key points, any extraneous factors and personal impressions was made. This mechanism continued with the interviews that were professionally transcribed for these were done a few at a time. When these transcripts were returned they were read through and any elements that were not clear were checked against the tape. In the two cases where the tape was indecipherable I immediately set about providing what I had been trained as a student to produce – a process recording. Taped interviews were not allowed to me as a student and it was then practice to record as fully as possible the progression of an interview, especially noting any significant points and the links between elements within a client's story. It was also required that silences and body language was noted as well as any personal reactions of the interviewer.

In the collection and analysis of this data, it was not the intention to perform a triangulation in the sense that different methods or measures would be used to 'fix' a position. Rather other material was gathered continuously from the on-going work with those attending the rehabilitation courses that could be placed alongside the material from the interviews to produce a more rounded and complete picture of driving after drinking amongst convicted Sheffield drivers. It may be argued that such a sensitisation process would provide a bias but I tried to avoid this happening. As the interviews progressed and I became clearer as to the issues being raised I began to look for alternative accounts, different explanations and other constructions and to take note of them. As the interviews were conducted between April 1996 and July 1997 this process became an interactive one in which different insights could be checked out in other interviews.

Once the extent of the available material was grasped a way to analyse that material needed to be found. Through the offices of the University of Surrey, who were operating a clearing house and resource centre for computer analysis of qualitative research material I was able to be put in touch with computer programmes that were being developed. I attended two day conferences comparing the different approaches and was attracted to the NUD*IST programme (QSR NUD*IST 1997). I decided to choose that programme, attended a training session, purchased the package and used it as the major tool of analysis. Each interview was copied into the programme and was thus able to be read on screen and material coded to as many analytical nodes as one desires. The selection of each portion of text so coded can be extended or reduced easily so that each chosen text is fully explanatory of the point being made. Having completed that first stage of analysis into nodes, where material with a common theme was gathered, the nodes themselves could be compared, contrasted, relocated and refined almost at will. Definitions, notes and memos can be, and were, attached to the material as required. I found it easier to compare, understand and work with the coded material when it was printed out and that procedure was used. It also meant that I could file in a standard filing cabinet printed copies of almost all the analytical material.

As an example of the method of analysis using NUD*IST I outline the approach relating to the concepts of drinking pattern and drinking style. As I read through each interview record I noted all the comments about drinking under very broad heads such as 'start of drinking', 'normal drinking', 'special occasions' and so forth. I then looked at the material I had separated and realised that there were many references to occasions of drinking such as 'weekend' or 'on Friday night'. Each of these was allocated a node; a search of all the texts was made to find other references and all references gathered together at each node. After further thought some were regrouped or merged, under the general heading of Drinking Pattern, to record matters such as 'abstain', 'on the job' 'occasional' 'in the day'. Further reflection showed that there was almost nothing about drinking at home so I searched through all the interviews for 'at home' and recorded the small amount of material at a node. 'Regular' was a frequently used word so these were isolated and then analysed, often by referring back to the text and examining the previous or next line or sentence where amplification may be contained. This allowed me to have distinct nodes for 'once a week', '2-3 times a week', '4-5 times a week', 'daily' 'only at weekend'. The latter were dealt with in the same manner as were references to the quantity drunk, where the drinking took place.

As is shown in the Appendix 3 I attempted to chart the pattern referred to as 'regular' for each person and had to realise that such a term encapsulated different patterns and as I had not concentrated questions on this aspect, but allowed people to describe their drinking in their own way, that I could not continue the analysis further except by reflecting on the material. Looking again at the interview texts led me to see that drinking patterns were flexible in that they changed often in response to changes in lifestyle. So some, with very settled routines could accurately speak of a 'regular' way of drinking that had continued for many years whilst others had frequent lifestyle changes and consequential changes in the way they drank. I also realised that almost all had one particular way of referring to themselves as a drinker and that this only accorded with one of the patterns referred to in interview. That referred to pattern was often not a current one but seemed to link with particular times that were recalled and formed the idea held of oneself as drinker. So I was able to distinguish and separate out the elements of what I have called a drinking pattern and to differentiate this from drinking style.

One of the key elements to be analysed was the process by which these subjects had come to make the decision to drive that led to their offence. There is a clear warning -

“Process in data is represented by happening and events that may or may not occur in continuous forms or sequences but it can always be located in a context... Although process often is described by analysts as stages or phases, it can also be examined in terms of sequences or shifts in the nature of action/interaction... Not everything that is process can be reduced to stages or phases, nor should it be.” (Strauss and Corbin 1998 p.166-7)

Such a warning reinforces the need to allow subjects a full opportunity to explain and explore their decisions and actions and for the researcher to be very open minded, reflective and imaginative in understanding them. It would have been possible to use the coding exercise to mechanistically place people in defined categories according to some scheme that seemed to come out of the study.

In the case of this study the reflective process has been long due in large measure to the expansion in the DDR scheme and the increased work the developments necessitated. However, the reflection has been enhanced by the researcher's continued work with other groups of drink drive offenders attending the DDR courses. Further stories, and reflection upon them, were heard and as others have explored their individual situations links have been seen, insights have resonated with these subjects and the process has been one of development. The effect the considerable growth of the scheme had upon my personal circumstances has not only increased my workload, delayed the completion of this thesis but also taken me away from such direct contact with the rehabilitative courses with offenders.

4 A REVIEW OF RESEARCH RELEVANT TO THE STUDY⁶

1 A review of the types of explanation for alcohol consumption

Introduction

There have been many approaches in the study of alcohol and I begin with a very brief review of some that are not pursued in depth because they do not relate directly to this study but provide background material.

Drinking alcohol remains one of the most widespread social activities in Western societies (WHO 2000, ECAS Studies 2002) and much research has been to examine the distribution of alcohol consumption at national aggregated levels (e.g. Pyorala 1990, Norström Ed 2002). There are wide national differences in the total amount consumed, those within a society consuming the alcohol, as well as the patterns and styles of the drinking. (Higuchi et al 1994, Holmila 1990, Hughes et al 1990, Suryani 1990). These descriptive approaches do not provide a full theoretical frame in which to explore the complexity that is drinking behaviour.

Whilst alcohol provides mood-altering benefits for individuals, it also has associated harms and social costs (Anderson 1994, Leifman et al 2002). Drinkers often do not recognise or understand these but doctors, policy makers, scholars and commentators consider them and believe the harms to be largely preventable (See *Addiction* 98,10, 2003). The main focus of such approaches has been to document, explore and account for the consequences of alcohol consumption that were labelled as harmful (Adams 1995) by those who undertook the work (e.g. Plant and Pirie 1979, Schwatz and Wirtz 1990, Smith et al 1990, Seppa et al 1992, Stockwell et al 1992, Dalton and Orford 2001). Such descriptions of alcohol drinking were limited in scope for they have viewed drinking alcohol in negative terms and explored it from the perspective of problems associated with its use, neglecting the drinking that was sanctioned in societies and has not led to associated harms. Nor is the relationship of alcohol to the harm clear, for studies by Stockwell et al (1992 and 1993) showed that the most acute form of harm associated with alcohol drinking was a violent incident and that when demographic characteristics were controlled for particular "licensed premises were significantly more likely to be the settings used prior to the harm occurring" (1993). Also MacDonald and Wells (2001) studying different groups who had suffered violent or accidental injuries found that the violent injury group were more likely "to be single, widowed, separated or divorced, to have used illicit drugs and licit drugs" as well as "have more than five drinks on a usual drinking occasion." In neither study was alcohol drinking the only factor in injury.

In the same way the considerable amount of work undertaken to support the disease concept of alcoholism is not considered to offer an explanation of why it is that people consume alcohol in the first place and may be little more than a convenient label (Peele 1989).

There have been explanations that are based upon our genetic and biological differences. Most of the continuing work in this field seeks to explore the factors that lead some people to addiction whilst others remain modest consumers of alcohol

⁶ For a statement of the aims and methods of this review, see Appendix 2.

and in a brief review of one approach Rende (1993) stated that "geneticists have long recognised that disorders may be due to a continuum of genetic and environmental risk factors rather than discrete etiological factors" (p.1185). In a further overview, Grunberg (1994) concluded that the traditional pharmacological classification, of stimulants and depressants, does not hold with regard to the underlying biological processes. These must be considered in the context of behavioural responses, such as reinforcement and motivation, and bio-behavioural mechanisms, such as interactions that emphasize psychological processes, and individual differences. Little (1999, 2000) also examined the biological and pharmacological methods by which alcohol affects human physiology and questioned the use and value of the depressant - stimulant terminology. She concluded, "...in the in vivo situation, the evidence is overwhelming that alcohol is not a globally "depressant" drug, [and] the complexity of its behavioural effects is not well described by either "stimulant" or "depressant." Perhaps these terms might with advantage be removed from the pharmacological lexicon."

A different approach has been to develop a typology of drinkers. Following Martin and Casswell (1987), these might be grouped into abstainers, light drinkers, frequent early evening drinkers, heavy hotel-tavern drinkers, club drinkers, solitary drinkers and party drinkers (also Kessel and Walton 1965). The characteristics that determine such groupings can be very different and lead to different drinking patterns based on quantity-frequency measures or total consumption or drinking location or type of drinking. Social class may also be a determining factor (Knupfer 1989, McCarthy et al 2002). In proceeding to deeper explanations in this direction we move closer to the domain of psychology, which is not the purpose of this review.

The question why men and women, and especially young people, seek the pleasure, the 'buzz', inebriation or altered states of consciousness through the use of alcohol can lead to an individualistic response often given in psychological terms (Leonard and Blane 1999). But for an activity that is so common, certainly within this sample of drivers, we need a wider frame of reference. Examining who consumes what in any particular society has brought recognition that the factors influencing any individual's consumption are very considerable and complex social, cultural, economic, familial, peer group and personal forces operate and must feature in any theoretical explanation and be set within local as well as national frames (Anderson and Lehto 1994). Some possibilities are reviewed below.

Social learning theory

The most powerful current explanations of drinking behaviour, including the question as to why people consume alcohol at all, fall within the ambit of social learning theory. There are many facets to this approach and much work that, whilst of an essentially descriptive or psychological nature, must be considered here. I shall look first at material that explores the way children discover and make use of alcohol.

a. Parental and family influences

In our society children discover about alcohol at an early age. Writing in 1972 Jahoda and Cramond claimed that most children would have encountered a drunk adult before school age. The intervening years have seen a change and "there is little danger now that children would be exposed to sights and sounds of drunkenness" (Burnett 1999 p.139). In our present society "drinking by children is...

a social problem that has caused recent concern: in 1995 it was estimated that 6% of boys and 5% of girls aged 11-15 drank more than the recommended adult limits." (Burnett 1999 p.139) Drinkers outnumber non-drinkers by the age of 12 and by 16 years, 94% have tried alcohol (Wright 1999) and the consumption patterns of young people have been explored (Marsh et al 1986, Bagnall and Plant 1987, Goddard and Higgins 1999, DoH 2001). They concluded that there were clear regional patterns to young people's drinking and that most do not drink in a harmful way.

One classic study of the way in which people start to drink alcohol, in Dublin and London, O'Connor (1978) considered four major influences. They were 1) ethnic and cultural - giving different drinking patterns, manifestations of the normal or abnormal, rates of addiction and drunkenness; 2) parental influences; 3) peer group influences and 4) social and personal factors such as alienation and anomie. She claimed that little was known about how parents influence drinking at 18+ years and few studies related parental attitudes, behaviour and involvement in children's activities, with the development of drinking practices. She felt that young people's drinking is the result of "a complex interplay of cultural, ethnic, parental and peer group influences." Culture, which she defined as "the social meaning and function of alcohol, drinking and drunkenness", was a significant factor and the lowest rates of problems associated with alcohol were where children were exposed to alcohol early, regularly, moderately and without moral imperatives; where alcohol was not seen as a proof of virility; where abstinence was acceptable and drunkenness was not; and where the general ground rules of drinking were agreed. As a result of her study she found the four key variables, hierarchically ranged in a general model, to be gender, with males drinking more than females subjected to an expected and accepted social role; peer group support where high support led to heavier drinking; the parents, and especially father's, mixed drinking, particularly having 3 or more drinks on one occasion; and ethnicity where there were differences related to prevalence and extent of drinking, the social meaning and function of alcohol, drinking and drunkenness. She stressed that it was the interplay of these factors that was important, for the "evidence indicates that a comprehensive understanding of alcohol use requires knowledge of how it is learned, the context of its use, the amount drunk, the social meaning and function of alcohol, as well as the consequences of its use." In a review of the importance of demographic factors on substance use and abuse, Babor (1994) supported the findings of O'Connor's (1978) major study of young drinkers and decided that age and gender were the characteristics that had greatest import.

Family and home have been seen as the greatest influences on children's drinking. In general, relationships between family life and the children were, and remain, complex (Connolly et al 1993). Adolescents, their best friends and their parents agreed that celebratory social drinking was acceptable but there was no common acceptance of drinking for personal reasons. There were some measurable differences between sons and daughters. (Wilks and Callan 1988) The extent of the waning influence of the home and the developing influence of the peer group as people move from childhood to adult life continues to be debated but Goffman (1963) asserted that "the nature of an individual... is generated by the nature of his group affiliations." (p.138) Davies and Stacey (1972) showed that negative attitudes towards drinking, gathered from the home, changed in a more positive direction as did drinking outside the home, which increased with age. That adolescent sub-cultures develop and have specific drinking styles associated with them has been charted (Moore 1990). Two Australian studies confirmed the link and its complexity. The one found that teenage drinking behaviour was modelled both on parents and the peer group but the internalised norms were of particular importance (Wilks et al 1989). A study in the West of Scotland found parental drinking behaviour was

associated positively with young people's drinking only in non-manual households and for daughters; social class and gender being independently associated (Green et al 1991). In another study Wilks et al (1989) found that sons' attitudes differed from "both parents" whilst daughters' attitudes differed less but sons agreed with best friends (See also Wilks and Callan 1988). Not only did the influences of the home and peer group change with "peer-led education appear[ing] to be efficacious" in delaying the start of drinking and reducing alcohol use (Perry and Grant 1991). Internalised factors, such as sensation seeking, (Martin et al 1990), and risk perceptions (Kleinhesselink and Rosa 1991) became important for young people. Fromme and Ruela (1994) reported that the perception adolescents had of the drinking of their family was an important precursor of alcohol consumption, as was the perception held of friends drinking. If there was a family history of problem drinking, Yu (2003) found that parental attitudes to and use of alcohol and restrictions placed upon the offspring's drinking, the amount of time they spent together significantly affected the children's drinking. Social support from friends moderated, whereas support from family did not moderate alcohol use for the children of 85 alcohol dependent people (Ohannessian and Hesselbrock 1993). Connolly et al (1993) found higher levels of 'problem behaviour' in the children of parents with alcohol problems, though the definitions and descriptions of the 'problems' attached to the children, as identified by the parents and teachers at 9 and 13 years, differed. This confirmed for them that the effects of non-alcohol related independent variables, such as reading proficiency, gender and family relationships, were significant.

In ordinary drinking terms, a positive association between the drinking level of parents and their adult offspring has been shown, though this varies according to the drinking level of the parent and the gender of the offspring (Webster et al 1989). But in the national 1958 cohort development study, Power and Estaug (1990) found that the influences on adult patterns are complex and that family formation factors were also important. Marriage and parenthood seemed to reinforce lighter drinking styles, but there were changes in drinking associated with the rate of partnership formation. They claimed heavy drinking partnerships seem to be unstable. In a study exploring how peer group and expectancies are modified and changed as people move into relationships, Leonard and Mudar (2000) concluded that their "results again demonstrate the similarity between husband and wife drinking, a similarity that cannot be attributed to assorting along sociodemographic factors, risk factors, or peer network backgrounds.

Factors, other than those associated with the family, might also be expected to play a part in young people learning to drink and in the quantities they drink. Vega et al (1993), in a study of different ethnic groups in America, found that the level of acculturation was a significant factor in the first use of alcohol. This was supported by a study of regional variations of young people's drinking in Finland, where the level of urbanisation experienced by the young people, as they developed, seemed to be a significant factor increasing their drinking (Karvonen 1995). The influence of mass media advertising has been shown to have both positive and negative effects but, in a longitudinal study of New Zealand adolescents, Connolly et al (1994) found a consistent positive relationship between the recall of TV adverts for alcohol at 15 years and the level of drinking at 18 years. Wigmore and Hinson (1991) set up an experiment where students drank in either the bar or the laboratory and were given different information about the drinks. Irrespective of the information given on alcohol content, consumption in the bar was greater than in the laboratory. They concluded that the place and setting of the drinking affects the amount drunk.

The thrust of these studies indicates that, in general, boys model their parent's drinking pattern but this is modified by the perceptions they hold of the drinking of family and their friends. The drinking pattern adopted is further modified by the culture of the young people themselves, the nature of their marital relationships, their urban location, their exposure to television adverts as well as the settings in which they drink. These studies question a purely family learning model and also sharply raise the question of gender differences.

b. The influence of gender

Gender is claimed as the major variable accounting for differences in drinking patterns and drinking problems (Brennan et al 1993, Babor 1994) so much so that "it is possible to present a coherent interpretation of gender differences in alcohol problems." (p.728 Mäkelä and Mustonen 2000) Ghodsian and Power (1987), in a longitudinal study at the ages of 16 and 23 years, showed there are major gender differences in that in England and Wales, males were drinking twice and in Scotland three times as much as females. Also males tended to drink beer and females aperitifs or spirits. At 23 years 12% of males and 2% of females were classified as heavy drinkers and those who drank the greatest quantity at 16 were most likely to be the largest drinkers at 23 years. Black and Markides (1993), from a nutritional study of Puerto Rican, Cuban-American and Mexican-American women in America, concluded that acculturation affected both the frequency of consumption and the probability of being a drinker. There were different effects between the three groups for total drinks consumed and drinks per occasion. Similarly Cervantes et al (1990) explored drinking in US born and immigrant Hispanic young adults and found clear gender differences between the two groups in alcohol use patterns and expectations about alcohol. In developing countries where women's roles were circumscribed and often excluded alcohol misuse those women who 'sinned' by drinking alcohol (and their families) suffered heavily (Ikuesan 1994, Mphi and commentaries by Pacurucu-Castillo, Gotoh, Araya, Kua, Medina-Mora 1994). The social settings attended by black and white women differed and this was reflected in different patterns of consumption (Herd and Grube 1993). The strength of this factor would appear to be borne out by the finding that, in Western societies, as women moved into occupations previously occupied predominantly by males their drinking increased and changed (Wilsnack and Wright 1991).

c. The influence of expectancies

In the development of social and personal identities (Goffman 1963) one of the elements leading to behaviour are expectations of the outcomes imprinted into our neural system (Goldman et al 1999). This general work has been applied to using alcohol so that, allied to those mentioned above, will be expectations that some will be alcohol drinkers and that others will not (Johnson et al 1996). Examining young school children there seemed to be a trend of early negative expectations but positive expectancies about drinking increasing with age by the assimilation of cultural stereotypes, with the bulk of the increase occurring in grades 3-4 (Miller et al 1990). Christiansen et al (1989) claimed that expectancies are predictive of adolescent drinking. Gerrard et al (2002) have suggested that these beliefs are changing over time and are not as definite as once they were.

Outcome Expectancy theory claims that, "behaviour is explained by individuals having expectations of particular reinforcing effects as the *outcome* of performing the behaviour in question" (p.59 author's italics, Jones et al 2001) or simply, "expectancies, the anticipated effects of alcohol" (p.1668 Leonard and Mudar

2000), The claim is that the “decision to drink is assumed to be driven partly by the belief that alcohol will result in certain desirable consequences”. (p.215 Leigh and Stacy 2004) The expectations may be generated as a result of direct or indirect experience. The range of expectations examined has been considerable and include “six domains of positive expectancies: global positive changes, sexual enhancement, social and physical pleasure, social assertiveness, relaxation and arousal/ aggression” (p. 720 McCarthy et al 2002). It does not seem to matter whether the expectations are accurate but is sufficient that they are held. (Jones et al 2001)

The expectations that certain effects would accrue from drinking can be positive or negative. These have often been examined as a “single bipolar construct of positive/negative affect, [but] expectancies about positive and negative outcomes of drinking might be better separated, conceptually”. (p.216 Leigh and Stacy 2004) If positive they will be a motivation to drink and it is positive expectations that have been studied most (Jones et al 2001). Knight and Godfrey (1993), in a laboratory test where male subjects were given, not given or offered alcohol prior to undertaking a test, found that for those in the optional condition “beliefs that alcohol would reduce anxiety in social situations and enhance social competence predicted the amount consumed.” Thus we might conclude that where there is an expectation of stimulation and pleasure from a moderate dose of alcohol, such drinking will follow (Schulze and Jones 2000). Indeed Oei et al (1990) showed that different beliefs about the effect of alcohol led to different amounts drunk in a public bar.

Negative expectations are an important part of any motivation to limit drinking. (Jones and McMahon 1998) Devine and Rosenberg (2000) found evidence that negative expectancies have a reduced effect in restraining drinking if positive expectancies are also held. Heavier drinkers have more positive expectancies than lighter drinkers (Johnson et al 1996) and dependent drinkers appear to have different expectations than the general population “for social and physical pleasure, social assertion and tension reduction for adults” (Brown et al 1985 quoted in Jones et al 2001) whilst adolescents expected enhanced cognitive and motor functioning. Jones also asserts that expectancies are more strongly associated with quantity than with frequency of drinking. (Jones et al 2001 for an alternative conclusion see Lee and Oei 1993)

The relationship of expectancies to time continues to be a matter of debate. Whether positive ones lead to either immediate satisfaction or long-term consequences may well depend on the timescale operated by researchers and have ranged from a few hours, through one year to three years. Stacy et al (1990), thought that some expectancy scores might well discriminate between ordinary drinking and the onset of ‘problem drinking’.

Legge and Sherlock (1990) argued that expectancies were culturally determined and to some extent modified by gender for females expected more stimulation and pleasure than did males, thus their drinking was consequentially less (George and McAfee 1987).

There seems to be little doubt that there is a relationship between expectancies and behaviour but it is a complex mechanism and the mechanism is not yet understood nor is it clear what specific expectancies different types of drinkers have, as Finnigan et al (1995) in their review showed. Studies have relied on one questionnaire that was designed to assess only positive expectancies. (Jones et al 2001) Leigh’s (1999) samples of both college students and the general population indicated that they believed the effects of alcohol were likely to happen to other

people and not to themselves and that this was particularly so when the expected behaviour was seen as socially undesirable and may be was no more "than an underlying rationale for the 'excuse' function of drinking" (p.378). Questions remain as to their relationship to other factors such as age (Leigh and Stacy 2004), educational attainment and occupation (McCarthy et al 2002), attitudes and socio-economic factors (Burden and Maisto 2000), the influence of cues in the setting or drink type (Schutze and Jones 2000) and actual drinking experience. Perhaps Jones et al 2001 summarises the present position when they state, "their contribution ... is, although significant, modest" (p.61 Jones et al 2001) when these other matters are taken into account.

In summary, Social Learning theory approaches the drinking of alcohol as a learned behaviour in which adult drinking patterns are responses to the introductions to alcohol, the observed adult patterns of drinking and the perceptions of them, the expectancies of who will drink and what will happen when they drink as seen within the primary family and there transmitted to the children. Gender affects these developments because the roles of males and females are different, the expectations placed upon them and the places where they congregate and meet are also different. Further factors directly affecting the drinking patterns of adults are the influence of the peer group and the exposure to media advertising of alcohol, also income and education, for these may, more than many other factors, determine lifestyle.

Cultural explanations

It is a general assumption of this study that human beings are socially constructed (Burkitt 1991) and that elements such as language, activity, power, social structures and history inherent in social relations are the building blocks. We live in community and share common cultures. Without seeking to provide a comprehensive review of the underlying theories (though see further elaboration in chapter 10), there are common matters that develop and need to be explored. We all have beliefs that certain things about ourselves, our communities and the world in which we live are as we think they are. We also have attitudes about and to all of those things and towards each other. For us as individuals these cohere together as personal norms and for communities and societies there are also group or social norms. These reflect the "dominant or most typical attitudes, expectations and behaviors [that] not only characterize these groups but also regulate group members' actions to perpetuate the collective norm." (Perkins 2002) They are some of the defining characteristics of our social and personal identities (Goffman 1963). It is from these perspectives that I will seek to review studies relevant to this study as they relate to alcohol consumption, driving and the drink-driving behaviour.

There are clear societal differences in drinking both in the amount consumed and in the type of drink generally consumed (see the European Comparative Alcohol Study, Skog 2001, *Addiction*, Supplement 1, February 2001) The differences are not just in total consumption for Hauge and Irgens-Jensen (1990) comparing countries found strong correlations with the enjoyment people reported experiencing from alcohol and their drinking level but little correlation with the national drinking level or the national life or culture. Within the Europe study the "dryness or wetness" of countries was discussed and differences noted in drinking to intoxication, with the Northernmost countries being the most intoxication-oriented. Ramstedt (2001) suggested that characteristics cannot only be "determined by drinking levels [but] also by drinking patterns, social control of drinking and the composition of alcohol-related problems". (p. S60,)

Hartka and Fillmore (1989), in their selective review of cross-cultural and cross-temporal explanations of drinking behaviour, found that the key variables in accounting for the type of drinking and its associated problems in societies might be the attitudes to drinking, the social support given to any type of drinking, and the teaching given by significant others. Also, in addition to the looseness of social controls, measures of impulsivity and nonconformity and those of alienation and maladjustment need to be taken into account, as must the nature of people's expectations and whether these can be met with or without alcohol.

The deep cultural 'expectancies' that lie within societies concerning alcohol have also been examined. As examples Larsen and Nergard (1990) examined the different expectations between Lapps and Norwegians and their consequent different drinking styles and Chin et al (1993), Cheung (1993) studied different Chinese experiences with alcohol and the reasons for them. How expectancies affect the beliefs, attitudes, understandings, and expectations of specific groups of people is not certain. In a study of Australian skinheads Moore (1990) found that they adopted a style of drinking that expressed their English ethnicity and skinhead subculture.

Drinking in any society changes and Hartka and Fillmore (1989) argued that there are almost no tested hypotheses to account for ... historical changes within societies. Lorraine Midanik (1999) examined historically the differences between two surveys of drinking in the USA in 1979 and 1995 and concluded that regardless of whether drunk "is seen as negative, positive or neutral behavior, current drinkers are reporting it more often with less alcohol ingested" (p.896) than they were in 1979. Attempting to determine the causal relationships, in the long-wave changes in the alcohol consumption of the USA, between factors such as age, gender, family, religious affiliation, educational level and alcohol consumption Brinkley (1999), using macro-economic methods, argued that income and income inequalities are not of themselves significant. Nor is price. She concluded that "the aging of the United States population, the increase in marital instability and greater participation rates by women in the labor force cause changes directly in ethanol consumption and cause changes indirectly through changing incomes and distribution of incomes." She found that social and demographic changes in the population had direct and indirect effects on alcohol consumption. Much research remains to be done to "observe, assess and verify the relationships between social, demographic and economic influences" (p.766) on people's drinking behaviour.

As long ago as 1962 Bales, without recognising societies that abhor alcohol, identified four functions of alcohol: religious, ceremonial, hedonistic (the conviviality that leads to drunkenness) and utilitarian by which he meant the relief or satisfaction of self-oriented needs. Whilst Pittman (1967) concluded that it is possible to range all cultures on a drinking continuum with four nodes from the abstinent culture with a negative view and prohibitive rules against alcohol, through the ambivalent, where there are conflicts between coexisting values and structures, to the permissive of alcohol but with negative views on drunkenness and the over-permissive both of alcohol and the behaviours of people when intoxicated. It is to be anticipated that the social complexity of western societies with their different stratifications, divisions of labour, developed uses of money, family structures and development of the individual have had particular effects on drinking patterns. It is recognised that one of the factors affecting expectancies is religious faith. I have not found an examination of the impact of the Muslim faith culture on drinking in their societies but personal knowledge shows that Muslim immigrants into our society face ambivalences regarding alcohol. Some drink openly, others drink but hide it from their families and community and others remain abstinent. These

matters influence the relations people have with alcohol and differentiate them from those of people of other cultures and culture is an important distinguishing feature. How much any individual will accept and be driven by cultural norms beliefs, attitudes and expectations is a personal choice.

Ostaszewski et al (undated) testing Ajzen and Fishbein's theories of reasoned action and planned behaviour confirmed that subjective norms are 'one of the strongest factors' in the intention to drink. Subjective norms are taken from cultural norms, the behaviour patterns typical of specific groups'. Perkins and Berkowitz (1987) defining social norms as 'shared rules or codes of behaviour', found them influential in shaping individual drinking behaviour, especially for the young, though the 'perceived norm' is of greater import than the actual norm for there is a tendency, among students, to over-estimate the normal drinking of their peers. Rabow et al (1987) exploring Durkheim's 1950 claim that collective "ways of thinking, acting and feeling have a power of coercion over and individual", asked whether these affected behaviour in an additive or interaction manner and found an "interactive model was supported" (p.60). It is the precise nature of these interactions that remain personal as in this study.

McClelland et al (1972) concluded from their experiments and cross-cultural studies that the only motivation for drinking alcohol was power and that this held at the individual and cross-cultural levels. For them drinking was a search for power and not nurturance. So men drank not to reduce anxiety, feel cared for, gratified, or to be incompetent but primarily to feel stronger. The key was the need for personal power, which may be occasioned by genetic make up, culture or lack of male solidarity. Seeman et al (1988) in a study of 500 males over 4 years found that powerlessness is directly related to drinking and drinking problems. On the assumption that the poorest people feel powerless, the government's Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, in 1998, concluded that "on the strong balance of probability, deprivation is today in Britain likely often to make a significant causal contribution to the cause, complications and intractability of damaging kinds of drug misuse. (para. 9.49 quoted Harrison and Gardiner 2001) Orford's et al (2001) study comparing the ways in which Mexican and English families coped with the dependent drinking of a family member found marked differences that crossed the cultural divides as families were tolerant of continued to care for their drinker in spite of the costs to their own health.

A MORI survey conducted for the Portman Group (Alcohol and Society 2001) concluded that people in the UK see drinking as an integral "part of their social life", "respect alcohol", see it as "the least risky of a range of substances" and "endorse a sensible drinking message" (p.7). Insofar as the generality of drinkers associated it with socialising (41%), relaxing (25%) and pleasure (15%) (p.11) the associations were positive and were the background to people's expectations of drinking alcohol. This supports Douglas (1987) who did not treat alcohol consumption as a problem, found no clear relation between alcohol and criminality or aggressive behaviour and challenged the views that some races, because of biology, are susceptible to the ill effects of alcohol and that alcohol leads to anomie. She argued that drinking performs three functions. First, it constructs the world as it is and, second, in its rituals there is a symbolic interaction that acts as one of the markers of personal identity and a boundary of inclusion/exclusion (see also Moore 1990). Drinking ceremonials construct an intelligible, bearable, ideal world that is preferable to the painful chaos that threatens. Thirdly, alcohol entrenches an alternative economy for its manufacture is a significant economic activity. In the same book Heath (1987) updated a, 1975, review and concluded that there was no need to revise the main conclusions that, in most societies, drinking is essentially a social act for promoting

relaxation and sociability that is embedded in a context of values, attitudes and other norms which constitute socio-cultural factors that influence the effects of drinking regardless of biochemical, physiological and pharmacological factors. Necessarily there are rules, linked to strong emotions and sanctions, as to who may and may not drink, in what context and with whom. The links with specifically associated problems are in fact rare and where alcohol related problems do occur they are linked to the way people drink and the values, attitudes and norms held about drinking. Later confirmation comes from the Social Issues Research Centre Oxford (1998), who are supported by the alcohol industry, and found that drinking alcohol is used to define situations, make an alternative reality, indicate status and make a statement of belonging. Additional powerful features are the social functions of drinking places (Wigmore and Hinson 1991) that create a separate world, assist in social integration and improve social bonding, across many cultures and mark them out from other meeting places.

Douglas (1987) claimed a distinct perspective in that alcohol consumption was not seen as a problem, found no clear relation between alcohol and criminality or aggressive behaviour, challenged the views that some races, because of biology, are susceptible to the ill effects of alcohol and that alcohol leads to anomie. She claimed to see drunkenness as a highly patterned, learned comportment that varies in cultures and drinking as a social act performed in a recognised social context (see Midanik 2002). As such she echoed MacAndrew and Edgerton's (1969) study of drunkenness that found societies where being drunk did not bring disinhibited behaviour or if it did it remained within well defined limits, where it varies depending on the situations or circumstances and its characteristics have also been transformed over time. In fact the range of behaviours associated with intoxication are extremely wide. As they conclude "drunken comportment is an essentially learned affair." (p.88)

There remains a question, for all the above approaches, as to why people continue to consume alcohol, sometimes heavily, for long periods even when there may be negative consequences. The response to this dilemma has been to suggest that when people are less socially anchored, have lowered social participation and frequency of contact with others and little support from their spouse or partner, drinking increases and alcohol problems ensue (Hanson 1994). Other factors that may play a part are boredom, emotional turmoil, financial status, amount of leisure time available and similar discrete items. I have found no study dealing with these matters in their totality. Another solution has been to describe all those with regular heavy drinking patterns as addicted to alcohol and some have used quantity consumed as a definition of addiction. Raistrick et al (1999) in a project underwritten by the Society for Addiction plainly state, "The consumption of alcohol is, for the majority of the adult population, a normal and unremarkable part of their lives." (p.37) The style and pattern of the drinking will, to a considerable degree, be dependent upon the chosen lifestyle and its' many components including leisure, friends, family relationships, location, employment social status and "shared understandings... that obtain among men living together in societies." (p.171 MacAndrew and Edgerton 1969)

In his major critical review of the importance of demographic factors on substance use and abuse Babor (1994) pointed to the major demographic trends over the past 30 years and concluded "research and policies...must recognise the intricate linkages among social, cultural and economic conditions, and take them into account in the development of better theories." Recognising the interconnectedness of these matters may go far in developing an understanding of social communal

drinking located in public places but will still leave questions about personal drinking that is an isolated personal activity.

2. A review of understandings of driving behaviour

There has been considerable research done over the past years about car ownership (e.g. National Travel Surveys, Family Expenditure Surveys) and to understand driver behaviour. The work continues by governments (e.g. DfT, Scottish Executive), transport bodies (e.g. Commission for Integrated Transport, AA, RAC), research bodies (e.g. TRL) and universities (e.g. Edinburgh, Southampton) with co-operative links to other countries (e.g. INRETS, INRIA in France, STRATEC in Belgium, SINTEF in Norway). In the 'traditional' profiling of drivers of motor vehicles the emphasis usually seems to be to discover those, usually seen as a small percentage, driver delinquents who are more dangerous or vulnerable drivers. Recent work has concerned young and novice drivers, fleet drivers, older drivers, commercial drivers, those who speed or use mobile phones. The object is to identify those more likely to have accidents. The significant factors that appeared in research studies since the 1940's are:

- Gender - in that men drivers figure much more than women drivers, drive cars with more powerful engines and more miles per annum
- Age - for younger drivers figure more than older ones
- Novice drivers
- Traffic offences committed - especially in the previous 3 years
- The type of offence committed – the relevant offences are speed violations, ignoring road signs, driving after drinking alcohol and not giving way
- Whether people are dependent or reliant on their cars.

Changes to the design of vehicles and to roads and highways to increase their safety have been incremental year on year. Many of these changes were self defeating in that improving dangerous places on the roads allowed drivers to go faster (Scottish Executive 2003). Adams (1995) has discussed the whole concept of risk particularly in relation to traffic and came to a different view to many government conclusions. He posits his work on the assumption that this world is a risky place and human beings cannot escape taking risks and in many situations actively seek risk, for pleasure is received in successfully completing challenges. It also needs to be remembered that drivers' attitudes and acceptable social norms of behaviour change, as does driving behaviour (Scottish Executive 2003)

Over the past 30 years work, with the same focus as above, at the national institution for transport research in France (INRETS) has developed the notion of 'basic driving behaviour'. This has explored the responses to 24 typical driving situations, such as accelerating to go through a junction when lights have turned to amber, exceeding the speed limit at night, not quite stopping at a stop sign, driving after consuming rather more alcohol than usual, crossing a continuous white line, travelling without the seat-belt fastened, exceeding the speed limit in daytime, driving home after drinking at a meal with friends, overtaking when one feels one can "just" make it, not giving way at a junction when vehicle approaching from right is not moving very fast, driving with the blood alcohol level over the legal limit, carrying more than the authorised number of passengers, driving with worn tyres, getting impatient at traffic light when pedestrians do not get out of the way quickly enough, driving in the knowledge that you have left your papers at home [Note: French law requires drivers to carry their identification and the driver and vehicle's documents when driving], not stopping if you bump into another vehicle or cause

minor damage, driving a vehicle without insurance and driving a vehicle with lights or indicators that do not work. Of the 24 items three relate to alcohol consumption.

Drivers rated their reaction when driving to the 24 items on a 7-point scale from 'never do' to 'always do it if I can without undue risk'.

Drivers were also asked, "What do you do when:

- At a crossroads a car approaches from the left without slowing down?
- At a pedestrian crossing, green for you, pedestrians start to cross?
- In a line of traffic another car overtakes and tries to cut in front of you?
- In a narrow street behind a taxi, the driver slowly carries luggage to the door?"

In situations, such as those above, that are commonly met with when driving, any observation of road traffic shows that there are clearly not standard automated responses but more individual responses by drivers. The INRETS approach seeks to understand such differences in driving behaviour as responses, to the different situations encountered, in accordance with a "personal norm".

The distinction of Evans (1991), in the USA, between driver performance, defined as the perceptive and motor faculties utilised by a driver or what the driver *can* do, and driver behaviour, defined as what the driver actually *does* do, supported the position. This with their research allowed a further step to be taken and led to the French concept of:

Basic driving behaviour as the driver's fairly stable (e.g. usual or habitual) pattern of driving behaviour in different driving situations.

Their evidence is that the pattern is relatively stable and is the driver's application of a system of 'rules', which is the personal way of doing things, that include:

1. responses to **legal traffic rules** that are perceived differently by individuals. Also each driver has a profile of the personal status given to each traffic rule. Some traffic rules are given the status of interdiction and are viewed as serious violations. These relate to dangerous encroachment or violation of a driver's territory such as cutting in or some overtaking. Another given status is 'not open to question'. Rules in this category are accepted with a degree of tolerance and examples are too much alcohol, red lights, stop signs and 'violations of the forbidden areas of roadway' when driving too close to two wheeled drivers or overtaking with inches to spare. A further 'open to question' status is given to those rules that are rarely enforced or seen to have little risk such as not wearing a seat belt, changing lanes on highway. The final category they termed, 'depreciated laws' status because the rules are seen as arbitrary such as speed limits, going through amber lights and compelling others to give way.
2. **informal social** -the researcher's claim that the public does not regard traffic offences as criminal acts and there is little social stigma attached to the offending .
3. **personal norms** that are generally kept.

These personal norms are then considered to be "organised according to a system of norms... that stem from three levels of reference: the laws regulating the use of the road; social norms attesting to the socio-cultural integration of the legal dimension; personal norms linked to the pleasure of driving and bearing a personal stamp." (Biecheler-Fretel 1988 p.267)

Further work discriminated between drivers. They were classified as 'illegal' on the basis of tendencies "to self appropriation of the road space" and "driving under the influence of alcohol". Others were classified as "dangerous" because they did not

keep to a strict abstinence from alcohol prior to driving, did not wear a safety belt and used excessive speeds as discriminating characteristics (p 6-7 Biecheler 1990). Another approach was that of Fuller (1984) who saw driving, in essence, as threat avoidance. As a result he saw two predominant driving styles that follow from his observation. There is either anticipatory avoidance or delayed avoidance types of driving. In the latter style hazards are approached faster and with more likelihood of collisions with other road users. This approach, whilst giving drivers personal rules based those rules on the single concept of avoiding threats to oneself as a driver.

Summarising the above groups and all the factors, the concept of basic driving behaviour is seen to comprise first and foremost the drivers' personal position in relation to the rules of the road as a whole and then, in relation to specific rules, on the driver's partial expectations in the area of driving. Generally, women, except young ones, are particularly law-abiding while men, especially below age 35, have a decided inclination to break the law. There are two contrasting trends between the driver's choice of a high basic speed, with the tendency to maintain this in a variety of driving conditions, and a tendency towards either competitiveness or negotiation. The position regarding alcohol consumption prior to driving has different norms, either a personal alcohol consumption norm – e.g. 'drinking with friends', 'had more than usual' or a legal norm. The remaining factors are the invasion of forbidden parts of highway [e.g. white lines, red lights] and using sections of road the driver feels entitled to hold [e.g. claiming rights of way] and breaking urban laws. Each person has a particular profile across the above factors and this is the stable basic driving behaviour.

In her 1997 summary of 10 years of work on these matters Mme Biecheler concluded that "usual driving behaviour patterns" are determined by the "socio-cultural elements that determine lifestyle" such as "place of residence, drinking habits, socio-professional integration and use of vehicle". This confirmed her earlier statement that "one is tempted to conclude that the mechanisms responsible for basic driving behaviour stem from life styles which clearly combine use of vehicles with consumption of alcoholic drink. Personality factors would appear only to play a very secondary role here." Support for this position came from Jonah's 1997 review of studies dealing with sensation seeking and risky driving where he concluded that such sensation seeking is "moderately related to risky driving" (p.663) especially among the young for there were some who desired to test skills and machines as close to the limit as was possible for them. Also "on the whole the data collected from the basic driving behaviour of drivers may well provide a more consistent conception of the phenomena of deviance in the field of driving." (Biecheler-Fretel 1988)

She also found that there are structures of interaction between variables that identify groups of drivers with particular accident risks. These high-risk groups have a close correlation between "demographic and socio-cultural characteristics" and habitual driving behaviour that is "largely the result of social habits". She concluded, "Thus the place occupied by the decision-making process in driving is generally overestimated, as is the role of the "need for safety" as a fundamental component of risk control." (Biecheler et al 1997) This study adds to the conclusion that drivers have a stable pattern of driving, notions that they also have complex patterns of drinking but settled ideas of themselves as both drivers, drinkers and drinking drivers.

3. A review of explanations for driving after drinking alcohol

Introduction

HL Ross in a lecture I attended entitled, "The History of Driving Under the Influence" (see also Ross 1997) charted the four stages that he recognised concerning his experience of working in this field. The majority of his examples came from the United States of America, but he was cognisant of and made reference to European countries. His four stages were:

	<i>Period</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Factors</i>
1	1930's – 1960's	Era of the driver	Human error is the cause of accidents, DUI etc. Thus driver education the answer.
2	1967 – 1978	Era of science	In USA start of Dept. of Transport. Vehicle design can reduce risk. Nader: Involvement of many factors - roads, vehicle, driver and pre-crash and post-crash. Nörgerstein – produced a relative risk curve, so high BAC = fatality.
3	1978-	Era of public policy	Citizen action and publicity influenced law, including enforcement.
4	1988-		Surgeon General report bringing together traffic safety research and public health issues.

The above simplified, diagrammatic view of the field shows that there have been differing views about and explanations for the phenomenon of drink driving.

There has not been and is not an agreed and over-arching theory that offers an explanation for drink driving for the considerable spread of offenders throughout the population of drivers would not allow a sub-cultural theory. If there is one candidate it could be Matza's drift theory. With his colleague Sykes (Sykes and Matza 1957) he argued that deviant behaviour does not stem from a sub-cultural value system, because deviants do not reject the values, attitudes or beliefs of law abiding people. They support the norm for many expressed remorse, shame or guilt – they believed they had done something wrong. The authors argue that it is not possible to differentiate between 'criminals' and 'non-criminals' on the basis of a commitment to a deviant sub-cultural value system. Rather Matza argued that people are socialised into 'conventional values', by which we all try to live our daily lives, but we are also aware of what he called 'subterranean values'. These are buried within us as things we know exist but do not do, such as murder people. However, it is possible, especially for the young and those without settled lifestyles to move between these two competing value systems. They proposed five classic techniques of neutralisation in which offenders: deny responsibility, claiming that something such as having drunk too much 'made me do it'; injury, claiming that no one was harmed; a victim, straightforward if there was no accident or the victim was partly or fully responsible by their behaviour. They also condemn the condemners, in this study almost certainly the police or those who inform them, who also drink and drive and are hypocrites. Finally the values of society take a back seat when placed against the demands of other loyalties to friends, family or getting to work on time. Theoretically this position may be inconclusive but, as we shall see, there are strong links to this study.

There are also strong links in this study to the allied labelling theory that suggests that to understand an action the social context needs to be examined and to see who is interpreting the behaviour and why it is so interpreted at particular times. Here the focus of attention moves from the behaviour, drink driving, to the subjective social context and how that is interpreted by the actor and by other people (see *Deviance and Social Control: Interactionism*).

Whilst the earliest driving brought a view that the drunk driver was a menace it was not until 1950 that the first International conference brought together interested researchers with a strong lobby from the temperance field (ICADTS 2000). "Not until the 1960s were even rough estimates of the extent of alcohol involvement in road accidents generally available. During the 1960s and 1970s, two significant research advances helped to set the stage ... The first of these was the determination of the proportion of the crashes involving drinking drivers and the second was the demonstration of the relationship of crash risk to blood alcohol concentration (BAC)" (Wilson and Mann 1990 p.1). There has been a continued concern at the lack of relevant theoretical material in which to frame the considerable body of empirical evidence.

Empirical studies

There is a common view that drink drivers are heavy drinkers and mainly of beer (see Greenfield and Rogers 1999, Gruenewald et al 2000) and to those characteristics Holubowycz and McLean (1995) added *drinking alone*. There is evidence that "the more frequently people go drinking the more likely they are to drink and drive, and the more people drink per session, the more likely they are to drink and drive" (p.25 Schechtman et al 1999) confirming the stereotype. Those who drink at many drinking locations are more likely to drink and offend more than those who drink at only one location (Wieczorek et al 1992b). Wood et al (1995) claimed that the association of particular drinking places and drink driving arrests is not significant (but see Wigmore and Hinson 1991) and is related more to the entertainment the place provides so that it is the last call when out for the night. Likewise Snow and Anderson (1987) argued that there were "at least six independent reasons for selecting a drinking place" and this was a neglected element of research "that could prove fruitful" and that "theory must recognise that drinking driving is a transportation problem as well as a drinking problem" (p.93 see also Single 1993). That is one reason why such drivers also take a range of other actions to avoid drink driving (Caudill et al 2001). It is not enough to identify beer drinkers as the drink drivers for Gruenewald et al (2000) showed that the association of beer consumption with drink driving arises not directly from drinking beer but "from circumstances in which the sub population of beer drinkers find themselves".

There is evidence that those who drink less frequently and consume small amounts when they do drink report little drink driving. Nevertheless there is also evidence that drinking alcohol, even at low doses considerably below the set legal limits, alters psychomotor functions. The exact changes relate to individuals for there are many possibly confounding factors, such as irregular and inexperienced drinkers as compared to heavy drinkers and gender-age relations, which have not been sufficiently explored (Ferrara et al 1994). On the other hand it is not safe to assume that once alcohol has been consumed people are unfit to drive for, of Spanish drivers "with alcohol-related problems some 72% were considered fit to drive" (Rio et al 2001). This is why so many countries allow some alcohol to be present in drivers before legally defining them as unfit to drive. One individual factor confusing a simple correlation between amount drunk and drink driving is that the

understanding people have of the amount they have consumed tends not to be accurate. Around 50% underestimate their consumption (Kloeden et al 1994) though understanding their frequency of drinking and the quantity consumed remains consistent whatever the method of obtaining that information (Hays et al 1994).

Once people drink alcohol the evidence is clear that their judgements of their own level of intoxication and their driving abilities are flawed (Jaccard and Turrisi 1987, Job 1990), as is their assessment of the dangers associated with their drinking and driving. Whilst the general relationship is clear studies show differences in their particularities. The risks of driving tend to be under-estimated, so that in a study of people admitted to a Liverpool accident service 22.4% had been drinking prior to the accident (Redfern et al 1988). The risks whilst actually driving are also underestimated (McMillen and Wells-Parker 1987) as are the risks to passengers. In USA some 60% of children killed in road accidents are travelling with an adult driver who is alcohol impaired (Voas et al 2002). Such underestimation of risks seems especially to be the case for binge drinkers (Nelson et al 1998, 1999) and beer drinkers (Greenfield and Rogers 1999, Jessor 1987a). Young drivers pose distinct questions for with BAC's of circa 50mg% they perceive both hazards arising from their own actions and from the actions of other road users as less dangerous than when sober (Deery and Love 1996). However, Loxley et al (1992a) showed that generally people are aware of the need to control their drinking prior to driving and reduce their consumption accordingly (see also Lennox and Quimby 1990).

Once BAC level reaches the legal limit men are influenced by friends' drinking plans (Lange et al 2000). A study of people leaving public houses in Perth, Australia found that 23% of those who were over the 80 mg% legal limit were observed to then drive (Rydon et al 1993). At that level people are most likely to judge they are fit to drive (Beirness 1987). A number of Canadian studies have shown that, all drivers are risk-taking drivers (Smith et al 1976, Ontario Interministerial Committee 1980, Stewart and Lawson 1987). Also being arrested for driving whilst impaired increases, by 4.3 times when aged between 21 and 34.

The association of alcohol and traffic accidents has been well researched since the Grand Rapids survey conclusively showed a link. Studies show that those involved in traffic accidents are also more likely to be heavier drinkers (Kristenson 1982, McLellan et al 1990, Robertson and Drummer 1994); to have drunk in unlicensed places such as private houses or parks; to be under 25 and have a higher BAC than others (Lang and Stockwell 1991); to be influenced by the peer group and see them as fellow drink drivers (Jessor and Jessor 1977); to have other traffic violations and a greater frequency of both driving whilst impaired and drink driving (McMillen et al 1992b, Horwood and Fergusson 2000). Drinking more than seven UK units trebles the risk of injury (McLeod et al 1999) and the chance of death in an alcohol related accident. (Brewer et al 1994, also Klein et al 1994) and also "doubles the risk of death from a given impact." (Evans and Frick 1993, also Ferrante et al 2001 for Australia) Those involved may attribute causality to the drinking (Cherpitel 1992). For drivers under 21 it is likely that their driving behaviour will have contributed to the accident (Horwood and Fergusson 2000) and this is but one aspect of lifestyle for "all young drivers do not have the same high accident risk." (Gregerson and Berg 1994)

Once convicted of a drink driving offence some 30% re-offend and the chance of re-offending increases with the BAC level at the time of selection for the study (Gjerde and Morland 1988). Also if the first offence was the result of a crash, especially

between 17 and 25 years, they are “significantly more likely to drink, drive and crash again.” (Ferrante et al 2001)

Other characteristics of drink drivers

Since at least the 1970's there have been attempts to examine drink drive offenders in terms of their mental health, personality, alcohol problems and criminal profiles. Personality and mental health characteristics have been seen as pre-disposing factors affecting driving behaviour. Some studies have sought to discover the distinctive psychosocial characteristics of drink drivers. One such study (Selzer et al 1977) took a group of drink drivers and compared them with a group of 'alcoholics' and a control group. They found that the drinking of the drink drivers fell between that of the other two groups, on measures of self control they matched the control group and on responsibility they matched the 'alcoholic' group but they were more depressed, had lower self esteem, were more paranoid and aggressive than the control group. Their main conclusion was that drink drivers are not a homogenous group. An earlier study of the driving records of men undergoing a hospital alcohol programme showed two distinct groups one with low accidents or traffic violations and one with higher. This latter group had four times the drink driving convictions than the first group and had tendencies to dominate, manipulate and control others and scored high on impulsivity, recklessness and irresponsibility measures (Mozdierz et al 1975). Yet Mulligan et al (1978) found no difference in psychiatric morbidity between drink drivers and people with alcohol problems and OPCS found that alcohol dependence increased as socio-economic status declined (Meltzer et al 1995). A number of studies have explored the amount of depressed affect within drinking drivers as with addicts (Selzer et al 1977) and Sutton (1994) found almost all his sample showed symptoms of depression and 38% signs of a 'clinical psychiatric syndrome' requiring treatment in addition to alcohol problems (See also Miller et al 1986). There is a clear overlap between two distinct populations (DoH 2002). Sutker et al 1980, concluded that, whilst there were some distinguishable profiles, the drink drive offenders were a relatively normal population with moderate drinking (see also Windle and Miller 1989 and Vingilis et al 1994). This may not conflict with the proposition that drinking and driving reflects a depressive reaction or an attempt to cope with stressful life events (Adebayo 1991).

Another strand within this work sought to move away from the continued emphasis on alcohol's effects as the primary contributory factor and explore other, particularly psycho-social, factors. Donovan and Marlatt (1982) on the basis of clusters of psychological characteristics distinguished five groups. The significance of these 5 groupings may not be high for they did not predict accidents or drink driving recidivism (Donovan et al 1986) even though two of the groups had “particularly high levels of risk-enhancing characteristics” (p.246) compared to the overall sample. Further when they compared the demographic characteristics and drinking of the groups there was no coherence between them but they suggested that drink driving may “represent a means of expressing underlying psychopathology” for two of the sub groups. Summarising this work in 1993, Donovan concluded that “both alcohol and ... personality and attitudinal factors independently contribute” (p.375) and McMillen et al 1992a) suggested that it is possible to distinguish between first and multiple drink drive offenders on the basis that multiple offenders had raised measures of hostility, sensation seeking, psychopathic deviance, mania and depression. Later Stacey et al (1994) found no evidence for attitudes predicting drink driving.

This type of study has continued and further comparisons were examined between the demographic and other characteristics of groups of drink drive offenders, high-

risk drivers, who had other traffic violations, and a group of general drivers. The general driver group was generally less deviant than the other two groups, who did not significantly differ from each other in either personality function or hostility measures. The conclusion was that there is a group of high-risk drivers, who might differ from general drivers in that they are less well educated, hold less well paid jobs, are of lower class and may be single or divorced. They also have lower levels of personality functioning and higher levels of hostility and driving related aggression. 11% of them obtained a drink drive conviction within 3 years (Donovan et al 1990). In an earlier paper, Donovan et al (1985) argued that there is "a constellation of traits that characterizes high risk individuals and sets them apart from the general driving population" (p.380) and that this group share characteristics with drinking drivers. In fact they recognised that the characteristics are not completely shared, the drinking drivers "being older, less well educated and of lower social position" (p.381) and more likely to be separated or divorced and have lower levels of high risk driving attitudes but to have higher levels of drinking than the high risk drivers. In the UK context Clayton (1997) found that drink driver "offenders were more likely to be under 50; single, divorced or separated; in semi-skilled or unskilled occupations; unemployed and to have previous motoring and non-motoring convictions" (p.3-12) as against a control group of non-offenders.

Miller and Windle (1990), whilst critical of many of the studies, in their review of this work propose four ways in which these factors may be related. First, some personality attributes such as sensation seeking may influence driving behaviour whether the person has been drinking or not and drinking may exacerbate these responses. Again, some personality attributes may influence drinking location, time of drinking and drinking patterns and thus driving. Also some attributes such as impulsivity may influence drinking behaviour such as when to stop drinking or not to drive. Finally, some attributes such as aggression may lead to a stressful life style with arguments with family that might lead to driving. They claim it is possible to distinguish drink drivers from the general population by their criminal deviant behaviour and depressed affect. This is examined later in the section on problem behaviour theory. Less convinced of the association was Wilson (1992) who repeated Donovan's 1980 study comparing general drivers with high risk ones but matching the age and gender distributions of the groups she found that "some of the deviance attributed by Donovan may have been exaggerated by confounding with age" and the drink driving and high risk groups are equally distributed across 4 clusters and are highly overlapping and to some extent indistinguishable populations and concludes that the "heterogeneity within the DWI and high-risk driving populations appears to outweigh their differences."

Two major criticisms of these approaches have been made. The first relates to the research tool almost all the above studies utilised - some form of cluster analysis. Wells-Parker et al (1993) used the same tool and understood that "substantially different classifications" may result when either different "clustering algorithms" or "samples of individuals" are used and coupled with "a failure to reject the null hypothesis that the data are distributed uniformly" argued that the identified groups are "artefacts of the clustering algorithm used". Whilst not "suggesting that cluster analysis is useless as a tool" they propose that future research "could focus on identifying the basic "dimensions" along which" drink drivers vary. (p. 217)

The second relates to the concept of drinking pattern. Traditionally the safety literature has distinguished social from problem drinkers. The latter group has been of concern and through the years different definitions of their pattern of drinking, such as consuming more than 5 drinks on at least 8 days each month, have been agreed. In the more general literature alcohol abuse and alcohol dependence have

been groups distinguished by criteria based on the American Psychiatric Association's diagnostic manual (DSM-III or DSM-IV). The drink driving literature has most often been concerned with preferred beverage, quantity and frequency of drinking, prevalence of drinking problems and drinking location. All these measures of drinking patterns were linked to the problems associated with drinking as much as with the drinking. (NHTSA 2001, chap.4) However at a 1995 international conference on this topic Dawson (1996) showed that when above average rates of morning or late-night drinking were the pattern, increases in interpersonal, hazardous use of alcohol or legal problems occurred. Rossow's study (1996) at the conference linked frequency of intoxication and overall alcohol consumption with involvement in violence. Gruenewald et al (1996) reported on their study of drink driving and put forward "a theoretical model of the relationships of drinking patterns and drinking behaviors to drinking and driving." (p.1637) They showed that "when drinking patterns are suitably modelled ... many alternative demographic measures previously related to driving after drinking ... appear not significant." Such correlates were "younger individuals, single individuals, males, those with lower educational status and lower incomes and members of minority groups" where much of the "demographic variation is actually due to differences in consumption patterns". (p. 1646) Their model is a complex mathematical one that includes frequency of drinking, expressed as the number of occasions per month or year; the quantity consumed, expressed as a probability of continuous drinking to incapacity; average consumption, as drinks per occasion; as the variables of drinking. They were still interested in the link between consumption pattern and the associated problems and included in their model are risk variables seen as incapacity for a particular behaviour conditional upon drinking pattern on either a single occasion or as a cumulative measure; frequency related to failure to perform. To these are also added "routine activities" such as what beverage is drunk and where by individuals, though they recognise "our ignorance about the routine activities in which individual drinkers engage" (p.1640). Because of this study's use of both drinking pattern and drinking style it is useful to include the results of this study here. These, as well as lessening the significance of demographic factors, also "support the suggestion that more comprehensive models of drinking patterns can lead to more thorough explanations of drinking and driving" (p.1646).

One of the conclusions of this study was that the majority of drinking episodes were harmless and carried no immediately dangerous implications either for the drinker or anyone else. Bondy (1996) in her overview of this conference examined patterns of consumption in relation to studies of heart disease and concluded, "alcohol-related problems [are] not unidimensionally defined by average volume consumed" but frequency of drinking and intoxication as well as variability of drinking need to be taken into account. She argued that where "lines of research from different methodologies converge" is the place where causal relationships may be found. Whilst this may be true for health results it leaves open the question as to how a drinking pattern explains a particular behaviour. There may be associations and, in the context of drink driving, they found that frequent drinking is most substantively related to driving after drinking, whilst the quantity consumed and their measure of drinking variance were most related to driving whilst intoxicated.

Drink drivers as criminals

As well as exploring the psychosocial and mental health features of drink drivers others have attempted to see drinking drivers simply as criminals. A UK study of 300 offenders found a group of 23%, predominantly middle-aged men, who appeared to have little sense of social responsibility and no fear of criminalisation and almost half had previous convictions, not necessarily for a motoring offence

(Portman Group 1994). Examination of the psychosocial characteristics of criminals to match those of drinking drivers has suggested the two populations are similar if not the same. In a 1983 survey of over 5,000 prisoners Weisheit and Klofas found the drink drivers to be older, white and employed as against the general prison population. But they were as likely as the general population to have prior arrests and to have a history of property offences. They were less likely to use other drugs. Using their measures of alcohol use and criminal involvement they could not distinguish the two groups in terms of the social characteristics of the offenders. McCord (1984) reported, his drink-driving group were more likely to have committed a property crime and to express their anger physically than his non-offender group. Murty and Roebuck (1991) found repeat drink drivers showed other criminal behaviours and Keane et al (1993) tested the general hypothesis, that criminal behaviour was impulsive and reflected a lack of self-control, in a roadside survey and found support for the theory. However, Seipel (2000) found that the theory did not explain the amount of variance as well as the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen 1985).

Such examinations, whilst charting a link between two groups of people, do not explain how it is that the two groups do not have matching characteristics. It is clear within the sample interviewed in this study that many were not guilty of other criminal behaviour.

Drink drivers as risk takers

Surveys of drivers indicated that drivers not wearing seat belts were more likely than the general driver to have a blood alcohol concentration above the legal limit (Scholes et al 1984). Others (Kidd and Holton 1993) saw both alcohol consumption and risky driving as elements within a broader risk-taking syndrome and together a more powerful predictor than gender. Klein et al (1993) saw adolescent young people's range of risky behaviours as fuelled by the mass media. Some doubt was cast upon the hypothesis by Thompson et al (1993) who found that "behavioural risk factor surveys" only helped "identify high risk drivers among women and drivers older than 65 years of age."

The influence of alcohol on risky behaviour is complex for McMillen et al (1987) found that young people who believed they had consumed a moderate amount of alcohol took the greatest risks with their driving but the actual amount of alcohol consumed produced no significant scores. Job (1990) found that overconfidence in one's "superior" driving abilities increased with age and driving experience as well as when alcohol had been consumed. But Thurman et al (1993) found that the extent of the impairment by alcohol was the most important variable in the decision to drink-drive. Biecheler and Fontaine (1994) surveyed previous work where the decision-making role, behaviour patterns acquired through experience and the attitudes of drivers were the significant elements of any risk taking. Their study found that attitudes to drink driving did not discriminate actual behaviour, that there were "structures of interaction between variables", that "the behaviours are largely the result of social habits" and that the importance of alcohol was "that drivers think they can drive normally after drinking and do not acknowledge the increased threat to their own safety" (p.75). From a random survey Grube and Voas (1996) concluded that the expectations regarding the physical risks of drink driving, the beliefs about friends disapproval and beliefs about the ease or difficulty of avoiding drink driving as well as the drinking modified behaviour.

In her discussion of this topic Leigh (1997) claimed that all the facets of risk have a common "dependence on concepts of probability and harm" (p.371) and so risk,

with known possibilities of possible outcomes, and uncertainty, involving unknown probabilities, must be separated (see Adams 1995). People appeared to be less sensitive to uncertainty than to risk and other dimensions included positive and negative aspects, short term or long term, general or specific, objective or subjective. Within this analytical frame she accepted that research is “consistent in showing a relationship between” alcohol and risk-taking and one approach was to explore the relationship within a problem behaviour syndrome where both “alcohol use and risk-taking [are] manifestations of a single underlying construct of deviance of unconventionality.” She argued that an alternative conceptualisation focuses, not on the motivations, but on the perceptions of risk. People “do not perceive risks correctly ... ability to calculate risk is poor... [and] consistently underestimate their own vulnerability.” Alcohol exacerbated all these conditions probably because “alcohol interferes with people’s ability to attend to peripheral cues and to foresee the consequences of their behaviour.” (all quotes p.377)

4. Theories relating to behaviour

I turn now to examine some theories that seek to explain behaviour, whether that is alcohol related drink driving or problem behaviour.

Theory of planned behaviour

An alternative general theory of reasoned action was proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) who argued that, in a causal model of behaviour, the two major variables were first, attitude, the elements of which were both general beliefs about the object and the evaluation of the consequences, and second measures of the situational norms which were shared cultural beliefs and the extent of conformity to them. When these variables were placed alongside a person’s ability to control her/his behaviour in specific circumstances, a clear model was presented in which beliefs, social norms and self efficacy led to intention which, when combined with self-efficacy or lack of it led to the behaviour. This model requires that the target, place, time and context of an action need to be understood (Aberg 1993).

In seeking to understand the reduction in American drinking between 1984 and 1995, Caetano and Clark (1998) found “powerful support for the idea that norms and attitudes toward drinking are associated with actual drinking behaviour” (p.55) and are “valuable predictors of current drinking and frequent heavy drinking patterns” (p.56). But it may be that alcohol consumption was more affected by ‘accidental’ circumstances such as group pressure and the size of the group than any personal beliefs. Personal self-esteem seemed to count for little when people were “out there” and under pressure to drink (Knibbe et al 1991).

Among those who have attempted to test the model in relationship to drink driving, largely in Sweden, Aberg (1993) concluded that a “strong relationship is found between social norms and attitudes against drunken driving” (p.294) and that “social norms precede both evaluations of sanctions and attitudes against drunken driving” and that “drinking habits affect all other variables in the model.” He suggested that for Swedish drivers drink driving was a moral issue with “strong negative social norms against drunken driving” (p.295). Also Kulick and Rosenberg (2000), tested the Marlatt and Gordon (1985) work on substance abuse relapse in the context of drink driving and found that the subjects were not short of alternative reasonable behaviours, such as walking, alternative transport, staying where they were, changing plans or waiting until BAC drops, but the assessment of their and

their companions level of intoxication was a major determinant of whether they drove or not.

It cannot be assumed that theories of planned behaviour actually describe real processes for the effects of alcohol on reasoning are well recognised and “whether ... reasoning and worrying really takes place immediately before drink driving starts remains an open question” (Bornewasser and Glitsch 2000 p.5). This study shows that people’s constructions of themselves do have a powerful influence on actions.

Serious criticisms have been made that the model takes no account of a person’s current or past behaviour or of situational factors, other than group size and pressure, as determinants of action. Nor has the aetiological value of attitudes been proved. Also the model fails to acknowledge that, for example, because drinking is a leisure, time-out activity normal beliefs may be suspended. Also modern views of personality seem to stress the dynamic, complex nature of people as integrated organisms. A holistic view requires the use of concepts such as multi-determination of actions, the interdependence of decisions, the complexity and non-linearity of personality factors as well as the many timeframes people use. When attitudes are integrated Magnusson and Toresad (1993) argued it provided support for those who argue for the complex nature of social drinking as a personal activity (Glass 1992, Wigmore and Hinson 1991). It also seems to be a circular argument to claim that once ‘reasons’ for an action are discovered a theory of reasoned behaviour follows.

Problem behaviour theory

In contrast to these explanations others (Knut-Inge and Perry 1990) have tried to see the development of drinking or drink driving behaviour (Jonah 1990) within the frame of problem behaviour theory (Jessor and Jessor 1977). Problem behaviour is defined as “behaviour that departs from the norms – both social and legal – of the larger society.” (Jessor 1987b p.332) The theory was formulated to account for deviant behaviour in 12-18 yr olds. According to Jessor, problem behaviour results from an interaction between the *Personality System*, and the *Perceived Environment System*. This interaction results in a third system, the *Behaviour System* that comprises both conventional behaviour and problem behaviour structures. However, Jessor sees these two elements of behaviour as relatively independent, in the sense that they tend to occur in different contexts.

This approach led Smith et al (1989) to see a pathway into drinking that started with family interaction problems that then led to a reduction in adolescent coping skills, which led to a belief that alcohol improves mental and physical functions and an increased acceptance by the peer group, which led to a need to conform to the peer group. This latter was seen as the predisposing factor to drinking and particularly heavy drinking. This position was close to an expectancy theory position in which the thrust to drinking is concentrated on the expected outcomes, wherever they are derived from. However, the association of drinking with early childhood difficulties including parental loss was not confirmed by the National Child Development Study (Eстаugh and Power 1991). If the link between alcohol and problem behaviour is taken to its logical conclusion, in the relationships involved between alcohol and criminal events, those relationships are almost certainly complex. Many of the ideas will be predicated on the notion that misuse or problem associated with alcohol consumption is a matter for individual judgement and definition.

Relating to driving Jessor (1987b), in a review of the literature, argued that few studies related impaired driving with other risky or conventional behaviour but some

evidence supported the notion that problem behaviours were part of a lifestyle of risk (relating to driving see Hemenway and Solnick 1993). This both inhibited involvement in health promoting and conventional behaviour and developed a behaviour system that has sections on driving behaviour, drinking behaviour, use of other drugs, health impairing behaviour, other deviant behaviour and a factor link with drug use, competitive speed, driver aggression, drinking quantity, seat belt use, impaired driving and problem drinking. Having reviewed much of the research Jonah (1990) concluded, "there is impressive support for the argument that impaired driving is embedded in a behaviour system consisting of risky driving, excessive alcohol consumption, drug use, and, to a lesser extent unhealthy behaviour and illegal activity" (p.34) though reckless behaviours reach a peak in the age 18-25 (Arnett 2000). Jonah did not find the same conclusive support for the relationship between DWI, the personality and perceived environment systems (but see the prospective study of Klepp et al 1991) who argued that these factors account for half the variance in drink driving) but claimed the evidence was "consistent with" problem behaviour theory. Further evidence comes from a study by Knut-Inge and Perry (1990) who concluded that, among the students they studied, drink driving "appears to be part of a larger syndrome of DD-related behaviours, such as driving after smoking marijuana, riding with a drinking driver, and drinking in cars." Donovan JE (1993) came to the same general conclusion but added psychosocial characteristics as a distinguishing feature. The difficulty in these studies is that they do not agree on the constellation of problem behaviours that make up the behaviour system of the adolescents studied other than it "violates normative standards" (Donovan 1993 p.609). Further doubt comes from Hemenway and Solnick's 1993 survey of 1,800 motorists and whilst they placed drink driving within a constellation of problems behaviours they found that risky driving behaviours were not linked to alcohol. In the study by Labouvie and Pinsky (2001) in which they compared riding with a drinking driver and drink driving they confirmed the suggestion from the Jessors that it is not individuals as such that need to be studied but the behaviours, for people appeared to engage in both safe and risky actions. They suggested that, "most individuals tend to make their decisions on a situation-by-situation basis and, therefore, may choose riskier alternatives at some times and safer alternatives at other times" (p.474). Both these authors and Arnett (2000) accepted that "emerging adulthood is a period of the life course that is culturally determined". As a variant on the above when aggregated social and demographic characteristics were studied there seemed to be evidence in Australia that "postcode areas characterised by low socio-economic status, low residential stability, low utilisation or access to public transport and disadvantage associated with being unemployed record higher rates of drink driving offenders" (Baum 1999 p.219).

In relation to drinking, Hutcheson et al (1995) in a report for government widened the concept of alcohol misuse, which they defined as "any alcohol consumption which may result in a cost to a company either directly or indirectly", away from the personal level. Surveying Swedish drink drivers Karlsson et al (2000) concluded that, "the great majority of drinking drivers were neither high alcohol consumers, binge drinkers nor alcohol dependent" (p.5). These both cast doubt on the whole hypothesis for problem behaviour theory cannot account either for all alcohol consumption or for all driving misbehaviour. They are both too common for this narrow focus to be the full account. So much of the work concerned with this position studied adolescent youngsters in the United States of America and there is a question as to their transferability to the adult group of drivers in the United Kingdom.

Tension reduction theory

Another approach has seen behaviour, particularly drinking as an act to reduce stress - the tension reduction theory (Conger 1956). The contention of this position was that the reasons for consuming alcohol, for many people, were to ameliorate the stresses and tensions of life. One argument was that when people were living in miserable conditions, as when unemployed or in poverty, alcohol consumption followed. There was evidence that depressed people drank to relieve their depression (Cockerham et al 1989), though the extent of the effect was moderated by the anticipated results (Johnson and Gurin 1994). There appeared to be only limited supportive evidence and later validation has been inconsistent, for example Winton et al (1986) found no evidence for increased drinking when drinkers became unemployed though this did not necessarily counteract the contention that unemployed people per se drank more regularly than those in employment. Supporting arguments that measured the anxiety disorders in 'alcoholics' and found them significantly greater than for the general population did not separate cause and effect, nor take account of other factors such as gender role, situation, pharmacology and expectancy. Indeed, Young et al (1990) argued that many studies failed to control for the expectation that tension would be reduced and stress ameliorated by having a drink. In comparing American with West German experiences, Cockerham et al (1989) found that anxiety was not significant in promoting drinking, but depression was associated with drinking. This suggested that cultural differences may underlie the differences in consumption.

Much earlier, Jung (1977) cast doubt on the validity of this approach and firmly concluded that there is no support for the idea that people drank for personal, immature reasons or to reduce negative affect or to escape from or forget problems and some studies suggest there is only a modest relationship between psychological distress and alcohol use. If expectancies are added Young et al (1988) believed that there was some support for the tension reduction theory. However, as many of these studies were undertaken with problem drinkers, it was difficult to distinguish between those factors which might influence people to start drinking and those that will foster heavier drinking to reduce tension if this was an anticipated result of the drinking of alcohol though Brennan et al (1999) did not find evidence for heavier or more frequent drinking to reduce stress. Within my sample some claimed to have driven to reduce tension but none to have gone drink driving to do so. As with other behavioural theories this position may be a partial explanation for some actions but not the whole behaviour

Deterrence theory

In essence, deterrence theory is the very simple notion that if tough sanctions are imposed the offending behaviour will diminish or not occur at all. This is not explanatory for the behaviour itself but a method for the elimination of behaviour that has already been labelled, by the state or other people, as unacceptable. The theory is posited on two clear assumptions. First, that people are rational and hedonistic beings, deterred by fear, free to choose and able to control personal behaviour. It assumes that people are aware of what is harmful to them and knowledgeable about the law and its sanctions. The second, that attachment to moral positions and social disapproval are of major importance in future behaviour. This element provided the theory with a predictive element. This is a somewhat functionalist and deterministic view of behaviour. Also people trained in the skills of rational decision-making fail to use them and drink drivers may not assess in the same way as non offenders (Harrison 2000). It has most frequently been used with drink driving but also alcohol related actions.

Casswell (1987) argued that the then emphasis on individual based strategies to combat drink driving needed to be enhanced by "broader structural changes" including taxation, control of access to alcohol and the enforcement of breath analysis legislation. Similar legislation had already reduced fatal accident rates in Australia and New Zealand (see also the criticism of a Presidential report on the same grounds by Mosher 1985 and Nichols and Ross's 1990 review of legal sanctions). There were evaluative studies by Forcier (1986) offering evidence that by introducing severer penalties there were increased arrests and reduced fatalities as well as conviction rates. Levy et al (1989) found that police road blocks reduced single vehicle night time crashes by 10-15%, stable over time, whilst educational programmes were less effective (See also Voas and Hause 1987). Voas et al (1997) described a comprehensive community trial in California based on the hypothesis that the trial would reduce alcohol related traffic accidents and they presented a causal model leading to that outcome. The value of deterrence seemed proved but Ross (1992, 1993) argued that the deterrence of the incapacitation when licences were revoked was only effective when the sanctions were certain and imposed swiftly (see Yu and Williford 1995).

Ross (1985), reviewing other studies, also found that well publicised threats reduced drunken driving in the short run but efforts to increase the certainty of punishment were not maintained in the long run. Also McCaul and McLean (1990) showed that there was no lasting effect of random breath testing unless it was accompanied by publicity and extra police resources (also McDonald et al 1991, Barker et al 1993) though its introduction probably altered drink driving behaviour (Loxley et al 1992b). In a review of the Canadian experience, where public information, educational campaigns and rehabilitative programmes were a part of the deterrence the conclusion was that "the impact has been limited and short-term" (Liban et al 1987) though measures were "impeded by methodological shortcomings of the evaluations". Likewise Evans (1991 quoted Adams 1995 p.119) showed no specific legislative punishment as having measurable effect on car deaths and argued that only a multiple law approach with an increased certainty of punishment reduced drink driving. Vingilis (1990) in her review indicated that the simple deterrence concept has been modified and updated with a range of allied social control mechanisms but "much of the reconceptualized thinking on deterrence has not yet reached the shores of drink-driving research" (p.100). She claimed that in other criminological literature extra-legal factors were taken into account such as - the criminal self-image and life organisation of those people who defined themselves as criminals; the extent of learning of skills; rationalisations from the criminal community; the offenders' group support; and moral commitment to upholding the law. She also argued that two other factors were salient, such as the opportunity for and ease of committing a crime and the social stigma and labelling process when a crime has been committed. Economists Benson et al (2000) in another review concluded, "most economic models of DUI using aggregate data fail to detect a deterrence effect ... because the study designs do not adequately consider the fact that police effort against this crime is, for a variety of reasons, relatively modest" (p.364). They claimed that criminologists had recognised that the allocation of police resources was crucial.

Vingilis (1990) suggested that when formal and informal sanctions have been compared it is the informal ones that show greater power and concluded, "we need to ask a more complex series of questions addressing the variability of conditions and circumstances in which drink driving does and does not occur." (p.112) The salience of her thesis was supported by the Portman Group's review of countermeasures to drink driving that needed to include reducing the legal limit; random breath testing; developed penalties on conviction with immediate licence

suspension, jail sentences; sanctions against the vehicle including interlock devices, issuing special licence plates or impounding the licence plate, impounding the vehicle or immobilising or forfeiting it. (Clayton, 1997) A similar set of options was offered for discussion in the government papers issued in 1998 and 2000 (DETR 1998, Home Office 2000). Both reports are predicated on the deterrence theory.

Other studies have indicated that there are other aspects at work in these programmes. For example, Homel (1988) found that a belief in the likelihood of apprehension by the police modified driving behaviour, especially for binge drinkers (Grosvenor et al 1999), as did the implementation of legal drinking age laws which reduced the fatal crashes for 15-24 year olds in the USA (Jones et al 1992) but deterrence is a "dynamic and unstable phenomenon." Green (1989b, 1991) showed that informal sanctions, such as loss of face with family, colleagues or friends, were most salient. Also Aberg (1993) argued that evaluation of the sanctions is only one determinant of drink driving along with attitudes, social norms and drinking habits. Guppy and Adams-Guppy (1995) also found that the "moral attachment" to non-drink-driving allied to the perceived limits of personal consumption formed "fundamental elements in the decision to drive after drinking among company vehicle car drivers.

To change behaviour needs a comprehensive strategy that would also focus on motivational factors and alternatives to drinking and driving, especially as there might be "a mechanism of judgemental bias" influencing individual driver's perceptions of proneness to accident and other risks (Albery and Guppy 1996). Green (1989a) clarified the theory model by examining 3 social inhibitors – the perceived threat of legal punishment; the moral commitment to legal norms; and the social disapproval of significant others and found only the latter two to have important effects.

Summary of studies of driving and drink driving behaviour

The basis of so much UK thinking about drinking drivers is deterrence theory. This does not seek to explain the behaviour but to deal with it.

There are similarities, associations and links between some drinking drivers and a number of other factors. Heavy or dependent drinking is one. But not all heavy drinkers are drinking drivers nor are all drinking drivers heavy drinkers. Neither does this work assist us to explain the behaviour of drink drivers who are only modest consumers of alcohol. Similarly there are a number of studies that identify a small group of convicted drink drivers who also exhibit other forms of criminal behaviour and seem little interested in keeping the law. Whether such an association is an adequate explanation of their actions is another matter. Again whilst there are some drink drivers who show psychiatric morbidity or drink to reduce stress or tension the links are neither consistent nor inclusive. Similar comments are relevant to the association of drinking drivers with risk takers.

Much of the empirical work on problem behaviour theory has concentrated on young people and makes important links between specific actions and a wider range of behaviour. It is of less relevance to older people who do not exhibit the characteristics outlined. Early work in this area concentrated on the people concerned and their characteristics. But a recent suggestion is that it is the individual actions rather than the actors that need to be studied for people use both safe and unsafe, acceptable and non-acceptable actions. There is no consistent pattern covering every action that can then be labelled as safe or acceptable or the

opposites. With this development the theory comes close to the position taken in this study where the specific drink driving actions have been explored. Likewise it would not be possible to label those I interviewed as falling within a group of people characterised as risk takers; indeed some would have opposite characteristics. Again it is the specific action that needs to be examined and understood rather than a general categorisation that only partially accounts for some actions.

The theoretical work of INRETS and their development of a model of driver behaviour does have descriptions that seem relevant to this study. There are drinking drivers whose personal norms seem to be “organised according to a system ... that stem[s] from three levels of reference: the laws regulating the use of the road; social norms attesting to the socio-cultural integration of the legal dimension; personal norms linked to the pleasure of driving and bearing a personal stamp.” It is also helpful to see that “usual driving behaviour patterns” are determined by “socio-cultural elements that determine lifestyle” such as “place of residence, drinking habits, socio-professional integration and use of vehicle”. This model links driving, including drink driving, into life styles that clearly combine use of vehicles with consumption of alcoholic drinks and finds support in the “model of lifestyle developed by Miegel (1990) in which lifestyle is structured in three levels – a level of basic values, a level of attitudes, and a level of actions.” (Gregerson and Berg 1994) Each level has four dimensions and on “the level of actions these dimensions are described as actions of interests, style, morality, and ideology.” (p.298)

The empirical work on drink driving offers a confused picture. Young people are heavily over represented among drink drivers in the USA and some other countries yet there is also a significant group of middle aged drink driver offenders. No consistent link between specific socio-psychological or personality characteristics and drink drivers has been established. Whilst some studies have shown a link between drink driving and levels of alcohol consumption, whether at a level to be labelled problem drinking or dependent on alcohol or not, others do not show such a link. Perhaps none of these studies has explored fully the concepts of drinking pattern and drinking style that are developed in this study. The matters the empirical studies do show is that alcohol significantly affects driver’s performance, particularly of the cognitive functions that play an important part in driving (Jaccard and Turrisi 1987), and also that the ability to accurately assess one’s skill level (Moskowitz 2000), always suspect, and the associated risks is further weakened by alcohol. Thus it is that there is a link between traffic accidents and drinking drivers (Borkenstein et al 1964). It was a feature in those studied in this project that there is a general lack of understanding of the scientific evidence about the specific effects of alcohol (see chapter 7).

5 JUST SOCIALISING – AS YOU DO

Introduction

This chapter explores the alcohol consumption of the group of drivers, though this was not as if alcohol consumption was their defining characteristic. The concepts of drinking pattern and style are introduced, from the relevant literature, but given an interpretation that arises from the analysis of how these subjects spoke of their alcohol consumption and how they understood their drinking. The format of the chapter is to take the elements of both drinking pattern and style and illustrate them. A further distinction between 'going for a drink' and 'having a drink' and the perceptions held about these activities is considered.

Turning aside to examine the nature of the current legislation, it is necessary to recognise that it is possible to be prosecuted for refusing to give a sample to the police for testing. Police practice remains to breath test all involved in some road traffic incidents. Thus it is possible for someone, who has not consumed alcohol, to refuse to provide a sample on a matter of principle. Further there are wide variations in police practice in relation to the taking of an evidential sample and, when someone who cannot, for whatever reason, provide the breath sample requested, they are not always offered the opportunity to provide an alternative sample. So it is possible, on either count, to be prosecuted successfully for failing to provide a specimen for analysis. There were some subjects interviewed for whom such scenarios were their personal accounts. For these, the law was a live issue for they had assumed that they would not be prosecuted and if that did happen that they would be exonerated. They were unaware of the imbalance of power in this law, which requires the defendant to prove that he was not guilty of driving with a level of alcohol above the legal limit present.

It would seem to be impossible to be a convicted drink-driver without consuming alcohol though some of these drinkers claimed that occasional, limited or non-consumption was the general norm in their case. However, it was much more likely that 'non consumption' was a not strictly accurate perception held by some people of themselves. It may indicate very irregular or occasional consumption to which was allied the feelings that drinking alcohol was not important to the person and could be taken or left at will and drinking was an unimportant activity that figured only slightly in a person's lifestyle and understanding of that lifestyle. Accepting, and not setting aside these few cases, it was important for me to attempt to obtain information about the drinking practices of all those interviewed, their feelings about it and the constructions, if any, they had of themselves as drinkers. This was achieved by my having the requirements of a standard drinking history in my mind as we talked together in the context of a relaxed 'informal' interview.

Drinking pattern and drinking style⁷

Whilst the early analytical work of this study was being undertaken, it was still common, in the alcohol field, to establish the nature of a person's alcohol

⁷ This section is loosely based upon HUTCHINSON P (2000) Is there a common drinking pattern of convicted drink drivers? *Stockholm: Proceedings of the 15th International Conference on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety, ICADTS, 2000*

consumption by seeking to determine the amount consumed over a stated period, often a week. Records of drinking levels of the men studied here, though recorded, are now only readily available for 34 of the drinkers. All of those interviewed had at some time, if only at the time of their offence, recorded drinking at least 40 units a week. Of the available records, at the start of the DDR course, 10 were drinking below the 20 units per week, 3 drank between 24 – 32 units, 8 between 36 – 48 units, 7 between 50 – 60 units and 5 between 80 – 92 units a week. The recording at the end of the course show differences in that 1 was abstaining, 12 were drinking up to 20 units, 10 between 24 – 34 units, 5 between 38 – 48, 4 between 50 – 60 and 1 continued to drink 80 units a week. I draw no conclusions from these figures.

This gives only limited information on which to analyse the possible complexity of a subject's drinking. In addition doubts as to the accuracy of self-reporting in this way have been expressed. In view of the usual difficulties many people have of recalling actual behaviour in detail over the past week with absolute accuracy, this criticism may well have a good basis in fact. Though to draw the conclusion that all self-reporting of consumers of alcohol is thereby false may be a step too far.

I also recorded the results of the screening test AUDIT in order to identify problem or dependent drinkers. Of these scores 3 people scored less than 8, the recognised starting point for problem drinking. The remainder scored between 8 and 22. On the dependency sub-scale no one scored 4 or more, the measure for dependency. It was a surprise to find that none of these heavy consumers of alcohol were dependent drinkers though Caetano (1999) has shown that in a general population dependence is "not the norm but the exception" (p. 264) and such a description should only be given after "careful probing of the drinking related behaviour." (p.255)

In the general field more extensive questionnaires to measure quantity and frequency were developed to explore in greater detail the nature and extent of an individual's alcohol consumption. But in the end these are structured constructs that lack the qualities that enable the person who is drinking to be seen. When this project began in 1995 there was little recognition that more than this needed to be undertaken as can be seen in the holding of a major conference on the matter late in that year (see below).

I felt this was not adequate and in my general conversations and work with this group of drink driver offenders wanted to hear more about the details of the drinking that they undertook. People were ready to describe their drinking in terms of its regularities and differences, not only about the sort of alcohol consumed, but the amount, the companions sharing the occasion and the place where it took place; the special occasions that were marked out in memory; events that preceded or followed drinking occasions; as well as why the drinking took place. Such recalled memories were clear and sharp, and quite minor variations from what was seen as usual could be accounted for in considerable detail. Thus for me were born the notions of what I conceived as a pattern of drinking and also a style of drinking.

However, one of the major difficulties in this area is that there is not a clear, accepted or theoretical notion of a drinking pattern, a point made by Gruenewald and Nephew (1994). At a major international conference on the 'Social and Health effects of different Drinking Patterns' held in Canada in November 1995 and published a year later (Rehm et al 1996), after the bulk of my interviews were finished, drinking patterns were simply defined as:

"By 'drinking patterns' we mean all aspects of alcohol use that are not covered by the term "volume of drinking" (usually operationalised by an

indicator of average quantity per week or day, typically derived from multiplying together frequency and average quantity questions). Such aspects include temporal variations in drinking, heavy drinking occasions or binges, settings, activities, and circumstances associated with drinking (e.g. public places), some personal characteristics of drinkers and characteristics of drinking partners, and types of beverages consumed.” (p.1615)

This may be criticised as placing a heavy concentration, within the whole, on mathematical constructs such as ‘volume of drinking’, ‘average quantity’ and ‘frequency’. Such a limited way of exploring the drinking of these convicted drink drivers offers little detailed understanding to either the analyst or the drinker. The average alcohol consumed, with whatever frequency, matters nothing when the police test indicates a BAC above the legal limit. Neither does such a definition seek to disentangle the remainder of the aspects of drinking and to recognise these as particular styles. The notion of ‘pattern’ was too wide within this definition to enable analysis to take place.

Gruenewald et al (1996) recognised “our ignorance about the routine activities in which individual drinkers engage and, subsequently, in which they may come to harm due to the incapacitating effects of alcohol.” Gruenewald and Nephew reported in 1994 on the large telephone study they conducted in which they explored the relationship of pattern of drinking to self-reported drinking. They were clear that pattern of drinking measures were significantly related to the likelihood of drink-driving and that these measures were superior to alternate measures to explain drink-driving, although theirs is a very complex mathematical model. They found the beverage consumed was unrelated to drink driving but the public venues for drinking were significantly related. They also concluded that socio-demographic differences could all be subsumed under the differences in drinking patterns. Their study attempted to bring together drinking occasion, times between drinking occasions, quantities consumed, continued drinking, drinking probability and drinking frequencies and they found that their “model of alcohol consumption patterns suggests a quite differentiated set of relationships between patterns of drinking and demographic backgrounds characteristics, reflecting the epidemiological complexity of alcohol use” (p.721). They saw drink driving as a function of: frequency of drinking; drinks per occasion; and random variation in quantities consumed over time.

In 1996 Gruenwald et al concluded that the results of the analyses presented at the conference support the suggestion that more comprehensive models of drinking patterns can lead to more thorough explanations of drinking and driving and thus, by assumption, alcohol-related injury and death resulting from traffic crashes.

Whilst I accept that it is important to understand both drinking patterns and drinking styles, I find that drink driving behaviour is not to be understood only in such terms. This will be developed later in this thesis. However, because I feel that, as analytical tools, both drinking pattern and drinking style are useful, it seems important to provide definitions of the two terms that will be regularly used from this point forward. By ‘pattern of drinking’ I mean the particular configuration of the occasions of a person’s consumption of alcohol. This will reflect:

- The frequency of drinking, ranging from infrequent occasions to regular daily consumption
- The type of alcohol consumed
- The quantity consumed
- Whether drinking is an haphazard, unrestricted activity or reserved to particular times or occasions

- Constraints upon the frequency pattern adopted, for example that drinking is not associated with work; or is only associated with weekend relaxation
- Habitual, consistent drinking either in relation to time or the quantity consumed.

'Drinking pattern' thus refers to how often a person drinks, the type of alcohol consumed and the quantity. It also takes account of constraints or otherwise to those occasions such as someone restricting drinking on Sunday to Thursday evenings because of starting work early the next morning, whilst the other evenings drinking is unrestricted or never drinking on the way home from work because of a desire to spend time with children. The construct also recognises whether the pattern is regular and in what ways.

As an example of someone with a very consistent drinking pattern, Guy, in his interview made the following statements, "the only lunchtime I've ever drunk is Sunday" and "I wouldn't give you twopence a bucketful in the day when I'm working" and "I used to drink most nights but I didn't drink that amount [10 pints] every night" and after a long days work he might "call in the pub and I've got all on to drink a couple of pints" and "we used to socialise at the weekends ... with the wives as well". His pattern is consistent in what he drinks and when he drinks, though that varies depending on his work, does not include lunchtimes and it is reserved to evenings and weekends when work is over.

In addition to the above it seems necessary to distinguish between drinking pattern as described above and other features that are more appropriately referred to as 'style'. In using the term 'drinking style' I mean the methods, places and people associated with an individual's consumption of alcohol. This will reflect:

- The location of drinking
- The people with whom drinking is undertaken or whether it is alone
- The introduction into drinking and the early setting of a personal style
- Those factors and conditions that direct the pattern of drinking.

This latter point has, of course, to be limited otherwise it will become a recognition and examination of a person's whole lifestyle. I would not want to limit these matters other than to relate each one to a person's drinking. For example some may feel under some social pressures or otherwise to drink. Loneliness, boredom, anxiety, jubilation and many more emotions or lifestyle events may lead particular people to consume alcohol in a specific manner, quantity or style. The point is not whether people have these conditions but whether they predispose to drinking.

Remaining with Guy as an example, he showed that his drinking was almost entirely in one pub and was conducted with the same few friends, though they were joined at weekends by their wives (see Douglas 1987). He had a particular introduction to drinking because his father ran a pub for some years and from the age of 7 his father gave him a pint of shandy on Saturday night. From aged 15 he associated with a few friends and drank at least one evening a week but was very clear that it did not mix with his work. He also recognised that his pattern was something "you just fall into" for "most people don't make [a] conscious decision that they're going to do a particular thing." (see the section on expectancies p 80f)

Drinking style recognises that someone drinks at a particular place because there particular friends are met, or a special sort of drinking takes place such as male members of a family always meeting on a Sunday lunchtime in a convenient location. Such matters may well be long-standing arrangements that have much to do with the way people were introduced to drinking. Some witness to never drinking in the week but only at weekends as a result of parental teaching. In this study, one subject's weekend drinking was a coming together of the whole extended family

every Saturday evening and this shaped that drinking (Wilks and Callan 1988). Others 'always' drank on certain nights because there was nothing they wanted to watch on TV whilst others drank whenever a major football match was shown on TV in the drinking place.

The drinking patterns of the group

My early analysis grouped together the references people made about their pattern of drinking. In the interview they were not asked in depth about drinking patterns as such but only about those patterns that impacted on potential driving after drinking, such as when someone is driving on the way home from work.

To illustrate the complexity with which I was faced Table 4 in Appendix 3 shows in diagrammatic form an early analysis of the main pattern referred to by each respondent. Without examining the detail of the table, it shows 177 different patterns in relation only to the frequency of drinking. The diversity and complexity simply relating to frequency is considerable and I sought to analyse this key element further by isolating the one major frequency pattern of the drinking reported. For illustrative purposes it is shown in the table below according to their age at interview:

Table 1. The major 'frequency of drinking' pattern of those interviewed

Age at Interview	< 20 years	20 – 29 years	30 - 39 years	40 - 49 years	50 – 59 years	65 + years	All
Daily		6	2	8	4		20
4-5 per week		2	1	1			4
2-3 per week		1	1	4			6
Once per week	1	4	2				7
Weekend only		2	3	2		1	8
Occasionally			1	1		1	3

Just under half of the men reported that, at some time in their career, their major drinking pattern was to drink daily and a further 10 drank on more than two occasions each week. So only half of these drinkers had a major drinking pattern in which they consumed alcohol on average 4 or more occasions per week. But at the reported stage, 15 of them restricted their drinking to once a week or only at weekends. The view of a further small group was that they were only 'occasional' drinkers, an assessment made because they considered that they had no regular daily or weekly consumption pattern. In addition six others, at some time, had been abstainers through medical advice, unemployment or lack of interest at that time in drinking alcohol. Also the majority had some times when they were either irregular drinkers or only drank small quantities when they did drink. It was easy to see how such consumption frequency patterns often confirmed the personal conclusions that the individual was only a modest or indeed occasional consumer.

It is clear that some of the respondents from this sample had many different frequency patterns, for leisure was varied and drinking accompanied most leisure activities whether at parties, nightclubs, playing or watching football, playing darts or pool at the club, visiting a gym (Portman Group 2001). Others only had two or three distinct patterns as when meeting male friends twice a week to play cards, going out with the partner one night at the weekend and meeting a relative on Sunday lunch. As one example Ray "brought up in pubs" was a regular heavy drinker from 16 or 17, but then he passed his driving test and "I didn't bother going out drinking much". That continued for "a couple of years, 3 years when you start going out regular with women". For a time he worked "at a night club" that reduced his drinking dramatically then he married at 22 and a pattern of going out "once a week once a fortnight" developed but after 3 months they separated for 3 months and after 2 years separated again for a year during which he went "out a lot more with friends". Weekends continued from Thursday to Sunday evening and, banned from driving, that was not a constraint. The separation continued for 5 years and towards the end of that time he reduced his drinking considerably and on his second marriage his drinking became occasional though when he did drink he drank heavily. His first four weeks of recorded drinking showed no drinking then he went out with his wife one Saturday night. This example shows how many times one person, through adolescence to adulthood, moved in and out of a particular drinking patterns (Power and Estaugh 1990).

For some, regularity did not feature in their frequency pattern, as their drinking was less organised than that. Brian saw himself, at one time, as "only a social drinker" on occasions when he "went out or to parties". Also Leo, who said, "until recently, until a couple of year ago I've never bothered about drinking" but recognised that he would have a drink if the occasion arose. Even in his drinking phase, although he saw his friends twice a week or so, these were not occasions for drinking. It was only, "If I fancy a drink I usually phone 'em up or call across and then we usually go for a drink". One of Ray's patterns was not to drink except, "I've always gone out on mates' birthdays, stag nights whatever, which may be once in a blue moon, it might be four or five events a year." Roy and Sam made the same claim. For some, lack of available money developed such a pattern as for Len and for Joe, when running an off-licence, "It was only when the beer arrived that I used to like test it." Again Ray when he worked in a nightclub did not drink there. However, for others their work encouraged drinking. Both Colin, a singer, and Harry, once a singer but latterly a DJ, were performers who used alcohol when working for "you need a drink, a couple of pints, to get up and sing." Likewise, Dave sold insurance for a time and "so me going out for a drink in different establishments on a lunchtime or a feetime... it was 'O! Dave, are you still doing mortgages?'". On the other hand, Bill "found out that drinking at lunchtimes, if you were on business, was totally stupid". These drinking patterns were rather more haphazard than regular because they were restricted to times and occasions that in essence had nothing to do with the drinking as such. If the people found themselves in the particular situation they would drink, otherwise not.

I had to recognise that in isolating frequency I had discovered only one small key element of the person's drinking and little about its nature. When timescale considerations were taken into account and frequency of drinking was set in the context of the ebb and flow of life's changes (Brinkley 1999) it became clear that many of the patterns identified were of brief duration. If there was to be any rigour in definition, my analysis had to continue and to seek to isolate other elements in what is encapsulated in the term drinking pattern.

One element must be the type of drink consumed, discussed in Greenfield and Rogers 1999 and Gruenewald et al 2000. But prior to the commencement of and throughout the period of this study I had been meeting these men on the rehabilitative courses where their drinking was explored in some depth. The almost universal report was that they drank beer or lager (Social Issues Research Centre 1998). Some older men reported also drinking spirits and rarely were these said to be the major drink. Wine was hardly mentioned except in the context of a formal meal whether that was in a restaurant or a family meal. Fortified wines were usually described in disparaging terms. Because of this ubiquitous use of beer or lager I did not ask any questions, in the interviews, about the type of alcohol consumed. I regret this for the few references given to me were thus insufficient to analyse.

A further element was the different quantities that people consumed within the same drinking pattern. This too varied. Yet the factor of quantity consumed on each occasion must be seen as an integral part of a drinking pattern, indeed the original theoretical work in this area was concerned with quantity-frequency patterns (Webb et al 1991). Once again the most straightforward conclusion from these respondents was that the quantity consumed on any occasion varied with the circumstances. As with the frequency of drinking the quantity varied over time. Clive usually drank "four pints" in his younger days for that was all he could afford but as a mature adult, "I think 8, a gallon as they say, and that's me. I'm happy on that." Relationships affected the quantity consumed as well as the frequency of drinking. As Ivor explained, his 3 pints as an 18 year old "can be a lot" but then when he was separated for four years "it was not three pints it was five, six pints" on most nights of the week. Throughout his adult life and whether in or out of a relationship, he still had "one day a week with the lads with six to eight pints and at that rate I still went out with some of the lads on Saturday dinner and had five pints". When with his wife he only went out on Saturday evening "mostly having three or four pints". For others, such as Chris, from drinking "one bottle of Newcastle Brown beer" which he enjoyed "it's built up and built up and built up. You know, from maybe one bottle a week or even half a bottle of cider or a can of lager or whatever, until in the last four or five years I've got so far into drinking that it'd be half a bottle of vodka a day." Of the 30 respondents who were specific about the quantities consumed, half referred to two or more different quantity patterns, depending on stage of life or circumstances or just different quantities for different drinking occasions.

For example, Paul was very clear that at lunchtime his drinking was limited "usually to two pints" but "sometimes three if we were talking." Again after work, prior to going home, it was "Usually a quick couple" and then when he went out later in the evening, in his earlier years it was "five, six pints" but in latter years his evening drinking was at home and either "two, three cans of lager or cider" or "just one can and a bottle, a small bottle of wine. About that." Many others spoke of one quantity when drinking in the week and a different, often larger quantity at weekends, or a 'normal' quantity that would be exceeded at parties, celebrations or special occasions. On such occasions, this could result, as it did for Ray who would be "absolutely blotto" even if only "once in a blue moon". In addition to the respondents who mentioned a precise measured quantity, many others were uncertain as to the quantities consumed. There were common descriptive phrases such as 'not much', 'just ordinary', 'quite heavy' and the like. These were relational references that indicate an observation either of other of their drinking occasions, or of what companions or other drinkers consume. For so many it was these observed measures that provided the benchmark for their own drinking. For others the only measure was that of being inebriated. Vince explained that in the week he had to get up for work next morning, but at the weekends, when he could "lie in, so you go ... until I'm drunk." In contradistinction to those people who drank to be inebriated,

drunk or until they fall over, Dan explained that, "As soon as I feel I've had enough I stop drinking".

It was not unusual for someone to indicate that he adopted a pattern of going out say one night per week and also twice at the weekend. He may also have indicated that when younger or when on his own and apart from his family or when money has been tight for him he may well have continued with the same pattern but the amount consumed on each drinking occasion reduced or varied considerably. In general these men witnessed that the quantity consumed lessened with age though some claimed the opposite because for them disposable income had increased with age (Brinkley 1999). To indicate something of the complexity here are two quotations from the interview with Ray.

"Yes, I got married when I was 21. Yep, we used to go out on a regular basis. It ran a year [like that] before I actually got married and it worked. No, two years before I got married, I wasn't 21, I was 22. For a couple of years I actually worked in a night club. So I was working most nights anyway, so going out for a drink wasn't something I did. Obviously I didn't drink before work..."

He then talked about the quantity he drank and how that varied and continued,

"Yes, we went through a bit of a... well ... We'd been married for three months and split up for three months. So it started, it didn't start on a good footing. After a couple of years we split up for nearly a year and I, in that year, would have gone out a lot more with friends."

Others spoke of drinking in a different way following the bereavement of a close relative sometimes for a few days, or weeks, or months and even longer. These differences included both frequency of drinking and the amount drunk and even the type of drink consumed.

Another element in the composition of a pattern of drinking related to whether drinking was an haphazard, unrestricted activity or reserved to particular times or occasions. This often meant restrictions placed upon the occasions and nature of their drinking. About a third of the group, at some time, drank only once a week or at weekends. For a number this weekend style of drinking was adopted as youngsters either because, as with Ray, they had little interest in drinking or, as Harry more graphically expressed his construction as, "especially when you go chasing the women like, on a Saturday night, when you're 18 you're going to the Embassy... A fag in one hand and a pint in the other. That was the pitch people expected of you..." This may or may not have continued into adult life but for the majority of those who, as adults, adopted a weekend only style of drinking this was a continuation of the pattern they had adopted as teenagers. Mark described his drinking at 17 as "Just Friday and Saturday" and recognised that now "being a bit older you are back to weekend drinking".

But the definition of a 'weekend' varied considerably. In time for Dave, it referred only to Sunday lunchtime drinking, whilst at the other end of the spectrum, for Ray and Dick, it referred to the time between being paid on Thursday and Sunday evening. For others such as Brian, Vince, Clive, Mark and Mick, who stated it as "then it were Friday and Saturday, go and have a good drink and then Sunday we'd be getting ready for back to work". It also related to work, being seen as that period when there was no work to be done and the person could relax and 'do his own thing'. A further element in their drinking only at the weekend is that this separated drinking from work (Douglas (1987). For many work, especially if this involved driving, and alcohol do not mix and alcohol was not consumed at a time when they

needed to be prepared for and able to work. As Clive expressed it his pattern developed "when I went in the Army. We had a regime; we'd train all week and didn't drink at all, and then the weekend off. I was based at Aldershot - we'd start drinking about half past six Friday teatime. We'd get the train to Guildford; drink round Guildford, night club and then taxi back to Aldershot. And that would be Friday night and Saturday night and Sunday dinner". If such drinking led to inebriation, as it regularly did for some, it was a safeguard that the behaviour associated with such loss of control was limited to leisure time. For some it had the character of throwing off the constraints required to function in the world of work and business and allowed a more natural being to surface and to flourish. Clearly limiting drinking to the weekend had no relationship to the quantity drunk which may be heavy as with Clive just quoted or as Dave who said, "I've always liked going out on a Sunday lunchtime, you know, 5 or 6 pints or whatever, coming home large meal, having a kip, watching a bit of telly Sunday night and then back at Monday morning, you know, out there raring to go."

For other weekend only drinkers, the rationale for adopting this pattern was the leisure activity they pursued such as football for Ian "that's when I got playing football and that ... Mainly weekends.." or walking for Owen who does "quite a bit of walking still on the moors...I used to go out to ... places like that, have three or four pints, probably even more, then walk back, pick up the car say six or seven o'clock at night. Good day out fresh air." (Portman Group 2001) It was the time for bonding with the partner, as with Ray, or with the family, as for Tom or Nigel who said, "I have only drunk at weekends when we have gone out as a family" or with mates, as with Alex. Ray finding himself "a single man again" when separated from his partner, continued with weekend drinking although it has an entirely different character in that it continued through "every Thursday, Friday and Saturday" and the quantity consumed increased and bore no relation to what he would drink when out with his partner.

Another feature of drinking pattern was the self-imposed constraints upon the pattern adopted or of some elements within it, for example that drinking is not associated with work; or is only associated with weekend relaxation. For many underpinning the adoption of their drinking pattern was the separation of work from drinking, which they saw as a leisure activity. Others made a point of insisting that they drank only in an evening, such as Ivor who, "when the shop closed at 10 p.m." or for Bill, when the evening activities in Scouting ended, or simply for the last "couple of hours" for Mark. A deliberate choice for many, even when the drinking took place earlier in the evening, was to restrict drinking to "after work" thus separating work from leisure. If the purpose of 'going for a drink' was relaxation it needed to be quite distinct from working activities. Over time patterns changed but the separation between work and leisure continued.

A further constituent of a drinking pattern was the whether it was habitual, consistent drinking either in relation to time or the quantity consumed. Gary, a professional man working together with his wife in the business office, expressed this - "we'd look at each other at nine o'clock and we'd want to go for a drink at the P-." Although, when interviewed, he worked from home the same habits continued for "Nowadays we'll look at each other at nine o'clock and say, "Do you fancy a glass of wine", and that's as far as it goes." However, the quantity consumed may vary considerably within such a pattern.

From this analysis I concluded that if there were distinguishing characteristics specific to these drinking drivers it was not found in drinking patterns unique to

them. But each person had one or more specific patterns in which drinking took place in the way described on many occasions, but the timescale was not of a fixed length. Another may replace one pattern at any time as a result of a particular circumstance – and whether the new pattern was in fact a new one or a return to an older version and for how long it remained in place were all matters dependent upon lifestyle circumstances. Also individuals often did not recognise or understand their own patterns and the diversity and complexity inherent in them.

The drinking styles of those interviewed

There are four elements in my definition of drinking styles. They are the location of drinking; the people with whom drinking takes place; the introduction to drinking and the setting of a personal style; lifestyle factors that directly impact upon the drinking. It seems logical to begin with an analysis of the way in which people started to drink. From these men, 44 spoke of their starting to drink, though this had two distinct meanings. For some it meant the first occasion on which they had a drink. Comment was also made on whether that occasion was repeated and the separate matter of the frequency with which it was repeated. For others, starting drinking meant when they regularly started to consume alcohol and they did not take account of, though might refer to, the first occasion or sips, small glasses or watered down drinks given by parents or other family members on special occasions such as Christmas.

Nine of the 44 recorded their onset of drinking began when they were below the age of 15. Two were brought up in public houses and were deliberately introduced to drinking as Guy explained, "I always used to go up on Saturday night and me Dad always used to do me a pint of shandy. Well this pint of shandy contained about 90% beer and 10% lemonade because by that time my Dad had had a few." Ray spent the years aged from 7 to 12 in a pub and "was always around people who drank." Although not brought up in a pub, Ken's family always had plenty of alcohol in the house and he was encouraged to drink appropriately from the earliest age he can recall (YU 2003). When aged 12, Will went to work doing odd jobs in a hotel and shared in the drinks that were bought for the staff. This drinking became so regular and concerning to his parents that they stopped having any alcohol in the house to stop him stealing it. At the same age three others were introduced to drinking, Sam and Dan by their fathers and Ben by a group of older friends. Two others had more exciting introductions in that Fred started drinking with his friends whenever they organised to obtain a bottle as they hung around on the streets. (Martin et al 1990) Jack recognised that from that age he had been stealing drinks from his parents' drinks cabinet in the home.

Two of the above, Fred and Dan, considered the above drinking not to be the start of their proper drinking and they recounted starting to drink later at around 15-16 years. This was the time when regular drinking commenced and childish drinking was left behind. Likewise, Ivor was introduced by his father to drinking when aged 15-16 as a once a week or fortnight drink at the pub, but he considered his regular drinking started when he was 17-18 (Christiansen et al 1989).

The most common age for starting to drink in this group was 15-17, which 26 stated was the case for them. Four recalled that this was the time they started to work and it was a part of the natural legitimated working behaviour of their colleagues, in which they were invited to join (O'Connor 1978). As Colin stated, "I started a job, started work and after work people went for a drink." For others the exact opposite

was the case for they were drinking on the streets with their friends. As Vince put it, "just hanging about with mates on the street, with nothing to do. So you do for some'at to do, don't you?" It was the same for Alex. Much more common was a group of friends going out together, usually at the weekend, and this was the style accepted by 11 of this group. Typical of the comments was that from Ed; "I was about 17. Just like all my friends did. We used to go on, it used to be Friday night then." (Moore 1990) Some shared in this going out drinking on more than one occasion in the week whilst others only participated on a less regular, occasional basis. In not every case did the participants go into clubs or pubs, for some would take a can and meet with friends at their homes, as for Huw who "... when I was 16, obviously not in pubs but at home or cans out with friends. Normally just on a Friday night." It is only to be expected that, at this age, some were introduced by their parents or family, to drinking as Tony recorded, "My father used to take me through to boarding school, I boarded and probably on a Sunday evening he would stop at a pub in M—, where he was friendly with the landlord... and I used to have a half or two halves of beer or something like that." (Webster et al 1989) For Owen it was his grandmother who owned a pub and so "I'd have a glass now and again when I went to see her and stuff like that..." For the majority this introduction to drinking was of minimal quantities but that cannot be assumed for all for "I was drinking heavy when I was 17 years old" said Sid, who further explained that "I'd got one or two people working for me doing gardening business, so I could work while dinner time and then I used to go into the pub drinking." He also paid the penalty in that by the age of 21 he was hospitalised as a result of his drinking.

Some 9 respondents recorded that their drinking started at the age of 17-18, for two of these when they went into the armed forces. In Len's case into the Navy, where the drinking was spasmodic and only regular when they were allowed on shore but for Vic the introduction was to a daily pattern. As with many of those who started at a younger age, the drinking was at weekends with friends as they socialised together. For Neil the introduction came through Scouting. As he explained, "Perhaps the first drink I had was with the Scouts. I used to go walking in the Lake District with Scoutmasters and senior Scouts and I would probably have a half of shandy or cider with my lunch."

Two recalled that they started "very late. I was 20 when I started drinking. I was always doing other things prior to that." (Dick) For Pat there was a clear self-accepted prohibition until then for he was a 'Pioneer' in Ireland and, although he came to England at 17, he kept to his vow "to abstain from alcohol until I was 20." (O'Connor 1978) For two others the commencement of drinking started in the mid thirties, Joe, when he owned an off licence and was then required to taste the beer in a new barrel and Chris, who was heavily involved in a drama group and eventually decided to accept the invitation to go and join some of the group who went for a drink after rehearsal.

As I reviewed the start of drinking in these interviews I could only reflect that these early experiences must have influenced, not only later drinking styles and/or patterns, but also other less tangible factors. If someone was introduced to alcohol by parents or within the family, with the tacit acknowledgement of its potency needing careful and deliberate handling, there must be different feelings and underlying expectations about that drinking from those who began to drink whilst they whiled away hours on the street. (Jones and McMahon 1998) Such drinking was an illegal act and frequently undertaken, as I understood the comments made, out of some sense of bravado, rebellion or mischief. This study did not pursue these matters and relate those earliest experiences to later use or later drinking allied to driving. It will need to be part of future studies.

A second element of a style of drinking relates to those with whom the drinking is undertaken. For two thirds of the men (32 people), their drinking was always linked to socialising with their friends. (Social Issues Research Centre 1998) The groups of friends were different. Some were school friendships that continued into adult life, as with Ian, "Lads that I'd grown up with and gone to school with we started going out on a Friday night." Others were friends made in connection with work where similarly there was an agreement to go out together once each week drinking. It may have extended over the weekend period. The drinking with colleagues from work may have been the major weekend social activity and an opportunity "just to relax and have a chat" (Owen), or a weekly lunch occasion to "have a pint at dinner time with a sandwich with some work colleagues" (Tony). Others at college or university were drinking with new friends or meeting up with friends whenever they returned home. (Burden and Maisto 2000) The references were regularly to 'mates' or 'the lads' and people with whom they relaxed, and were at ease. They were not always resident in the same area and so made special journeys to meet together. If these men were separated or divorced from their wives, the tendency was to turn much more regularly and frequently to these male friends to meet and drink together. Among these references, to these associates of their drinking, only rarely was there reference to women being included. The only direct one was from Paul "I went along with workmates who became friends. Talking work, at that time it was the thing to do, go out with your mates, your mates' girlfriends and we'd be talking work all night you know, and the girlfriends 'd be sat there talking to themselves." Two others (Ray and Dick) referred to other drinking when the girlfriends were more the focus of the gathering and the centre of attention.

Sixteen people referred to drinking where their wives or family were the main associates. Many of the men adapted their male only drinking with 'the lads' or their mates once they became married and reduced that drinking to once a week or some other arrangement. (Leonard and Mudar 2000) Alongside that they went out with their wives or girlfriends on other occasions. For others their female companion joined with the men and it became a regular and shared drinking occasion, as Paul expressed it, "you catalogue it as social drinking with friends and family and the wife as was." Will typified others when he said that his best friends had been his two older brothers and one was still his regular drinking partner, the other joining them when he was home from the merchant navy. For Tom such family drinking, when "we still go out Saturday night, because me other family and friends and that we just go out for a night like. Just local, to the local pubs", was distinct from his Friday night drinking, when he met with his male friends. The same was true for Alan who "two or three times a week, go out with the lads who I work with and maybe once a week go out with my parents, go down to a local."

Clearly parties and celebrations were occasions when families, work colleagues or friends got together depending on the occasion. Few referred to these as distinct drinking occasions unless they specified that they were times when consumption rose perhaps to uncomfortable heights. As Jack said, "I was unconscious in the corner sort of thing" whilst "everyone else was sort of relatively, you know, they drunk a bit but they were happy, laughing and everything". Although there were few distinct references, it was clear that such drinking occasions were major social occasions in which alcohol played a major part for many of them. (Bales 1962) The final groups of associations are linked through some sporting or leisure activity. This applied to eleven men. Frequently this was football but it also included doing up and racing cars (Eric), snooker (Guy, Sid), pool (Leo), walking (Owen, Neil) or table tennis (Roy).

Associating with particular people whilst drinking, was of major importance for the vast majority of the men. For one or two drinking consisted of meeting with the same two or three friends to maintain their bonding, drinking and perhaps sharing a common activity such as cards, dominoes, darts, pool. As Owen confirmed to me that he met three friends most nights to play snooker and have a drink. Different companions were often associated with different drinking patterns such as going to the pub or club on one or two evenings to drink with particular friends; meeting a particular relative such as father or brother; playing some sport and drinking with the other participants; one evening going out for a meal with the partner or immediate family; a weekend gathering of the family, however defined, for a drink or another occasion where drinking took place. For the majority, as with their drinking patterns, they also indicated that there were differences through time in the people with whom they met, and these changed as they progressed through life-style stages. For most, the comment of Dave that "I've found that I've got three different social areas. But the only time I meet with them is when you go for a drink. So err... its just a natural progression" was an accurate summary of their behaviour.

The third element that comprises a style of drinking is the location of that drinking. Virtually all of the respondents discussed drinking in public houses at some time in their drinking careers and just over half referred to a club as the venue for some of their drinking. Almost the totality of these respondents conceived of and referred to themselves as social drinkers, as distinct from drinkers who were perceived to drink at home and thus alone. It was almost a defensive reaction to the straightforward question epitomised by Harry who replied, "You sit in the house and you think... I mean, 'I don't drink in the house, I don't touch it'. Its more social, like as if you're going out somewhere, you don't want to go out and have a cup of tea..." Drinking was almost entirely an activity that was undertaken in the pub or club amongst friends, associates or family. (Snow and Anderson 1987)

Only eight mentioned drinking at home and their responses were circumscribed in specific directions. For example, Paul divorced from his wife and with the custody of two boys, regretted that "I don't get the leeway, opportunity as much as I used to for social drinking if you like. So drinking in the house became...the norm every night basically." Ray, who had long periods when he drank little, did "like a glass of wine now and again in the house but I don't like drinking beer in the house." Huw drank "mainly at the pub, on the odd occasion I will have a drink at home – if the football's on the telly or something like that but mainly at the pub." Roy, "never used to drink at home at all" until he worked at a banqueting suite 3 or 4 nights a week as a second job, limiting his opportunity of going to the pub. So he developed the habit of buying a few cans from the Off Licence and to drink at home, largely at weekends. Gary was very precise as to reason for his home drinking. It started when his wife joined him in the business and they transferred to working from home. They regularly found themselves working until late evening and deciding to have a couple of glasses of wine. He was, however, at pains to point out that, although it was only once a fortnight or even less, on a hospital visit, they parked in a pub car park and "pop in and have a couple in there" as he commented "so the habits are there!" Chris, was a late starter as a drinker and largely drank spirits, unless he went for a meal. He "never went to the pub". He could not conceive of drinking "eight or nine pints. I mean where do they put it all, they must have hollow legs", so this cemented the rationale for drinking at home. At one stage in his drinking Neil drank at home – he was stressed at work, his wife was having an affair and going away most weekends and so "I started to drink at home a lot" on those weekends. It was controlled in that he "started to drink on Friday night and I would drink on Saturday but on Sunday I wouldn't drink because I'd be thinking about Monday. Quite often I'd work on Sunday." Apart from Chris, perhaps the only true

home drinker was Ed who, "got into the habit of walking into the house, when I'd been to work, straight to the fridge and opening a can of lager, and then it got to 2 cans of lager, you know."

The final element in a drinking style is perhaps the most diffuse. It is those conditions that circumscribe, constrain, change or direct the particular style or pattern of drinking. Neil made two major points tellingly. His marital relationship was a critical factor to his whole stability and this was expressed in his drinking. As we have just seen, at one period, his job was stressful, his wife was going away for many weekends, and then he drank at home and alone. The other was the avoidance of alcohol in relation to work. In his case he ceased his heavy weekend tension-reducing drinking in good time to have a clear head for his working day. (Johnson and Gurin 1994) So many restricted their drinking to the weekend for a similar reason. Yet others, with almost mathematical precision, ensured that they did not drink prior to or whilst they were working as with Frank, a policeman, who always ceased his drinking so that he was alcohol-free for the start of his next shift. We shall later see that the same accuracy, precision and determination did not always continue into the drinking that was associated with driving.

Neil was not alone in having a distressed private life. There were others who had times when they were so sad and lonely that they simply wanted company. If there were drinking companions about, the natural step was to join them. Ian, divorced some years before and living on his own, daily met with his long-time friends "a lot of it now is for company" after work and before going home. Mick gave the same reason because "when you're 25, 26" and "you're still at home but no one really wants you at home". The remainder, Ray, Vince, Bill, Ivor, Keith, Neil, and Tony had all gone through divorce or the loss of a long term partner and in their own personal ways returned to meeting regularly with their old drinking friends. Drinking venues became the meeting places and drinking the activity that bound them together at these times and in these straitened circumstances.

A distinction between two types of drinking

Two important considerations need to be taken into account when exploring both drinking pattern and drinking style. One important distinction between different types of drinking has not been made so far. The distinction was drawn by Leo who, having indicated that until two years ago he had hardly gone drinking, continued in his interview, but -

"since I moved up here, all my mates they drink, and I've got to know them like so ... its like when I see 'em its mainly in the pub. When I do see them we usually go to the pub after.

So I presume when you say you weren't one for drinking you'd have a drink if the occasion arose?

Yea, now and again

But [you] weren't particularly -

No -

- going out drinking once or twice a week or anything like that?

No.

Right, but in the last couple of years you say that has changed -

Yes, Yes.

-because now you've got friends and when you see them you drink or you meet in pubs.

Yea.

How frequently might you see those?

Err.. I don't ... I see them a couple of times a week, but we don't ... I don't, we don't usually arrange to go for a drink. If I fancy a drink I usually phone 'em up or call across and then we usually go for a drink. Its not usually arranged beforehand. It's just on't spur of minute."

Dick made a similar point in a different way. We said,

"I think I got into a rut. Because you're married people expect certain things of you, you know, to say have a regular night out like, a regular night out with your wife. You know, just regular things, and I'm not like that. I'll do it for so long and I get bored with it and I have to change. For so long it did and then other things come on the horizon. ... I'll have a drink of lager and really enjoy, or cider. Its really refreshing and I can't think of anything better, but its just habit for some people and I feel sorry for them in a way 'cos they're just, their life just revolves around a pub or club and that's it."

In an entirely different context Giles who, for part of his adolescence, lived with his family abroad made a similar distinction, and when asked about the start of his drinking replied:

"Obviously when you mentioned starting drinking I didn't count the odd sip of wine with parents and that –

No

- but drinking with friends, going out drinking as I term it. Social drinking with a group of friends that was when I was living abroad and it was commonplace for groups of kids to go out and to bars and be drinking a reasonably large amount for kids of that age, but not large for the drinking that you do as you get older.

All right, so how any times might you go out, because it's rather different circumstances to what I usually meet here?

Because of the lifestyle out there, I mean every other night you are eating out because its so cheap out there and so you'd eat out with your family, with friends, you'd be drinking a glass, say a bottle of wine between four people, that sort of thing. Just with a meal. And we'd go out, well roughly three times a week and that would just be the way the lifestyle happened."

He then contrasted his return to boarding school, with clear restrictions against him and his school friends going out for a drink, and whilst it was from one extreme to another, "didn't feel that I had to go out drinking every three, every other day. It wasn't too bad."

I have quoted these three examples, taken from respondents in very different circumstances, in order to highlight that they were all making a similar distinction between 'having a drink' occasionally or otherwise and 'going for a drink'. This distinction was widely applicable throughout the group though not always as clearly expressed. By 'drinking' or 'having a drink' people meant calling for a pint because of thirst, or time to waste, or on the way home from work, or to see someone to do some business or drinking with a meal. The characteristics of such drinking were that it was an adjunct to another activity or had a very specific and minor rationale for it. It was almost always associated with ideas as to quantity, which were seen as being limited to 'one or two' pints of alcohol or "a bottle of wine shared between four people", though this might be flexible. Such drinking was distinct from the drinking that was 'going for a drink'. This drinking meant situations such as meeting friends to socialise, going with mates at the end of the working day, going to the local pub at the end of a working day to meet neighbours, friends or associates and discuss business, life, or local and world affairs. These were occasions when the purpose of the activity was to consume alcohol or to share the drinking of alcohol with family, friends or associates or to meet people, almost certainly known and liked, usually for pleasure, though also for business, in a place where the context was one of drinking. Such occasions included celebrations. The recognised purpose was to

consume alcohol or if there was some other purpose, it was recognised that alcohol consumption accompanied and was an integral part of that activity.

The second consideration affecting both drinking pattern and style was the association, or not, of quantity consumed with the nature of the drinking occasion. As we have seen 'having a drink' was usually associated with the consumption of a small amount of alcohol, but 'going for a drink' may or may not have clear associations with the quantity consumed, for this may vary from 'going out to get drunk' or celebrating something at which I will get inebriated, to sharing a bottle of wine with friends over a meal or meeting a colleague for one drink. This variation of intention was also allied to a very personal consideration as to what constituted a standard drink. This was consistently linked to a quantity, and particular quantities were linked to the occasions of drinking. So people have 'a drink' when they just 'have a drink'. Likewise 'going for a drink' indicated meeting with from one to six or eight companions where the implication was that all bought a drink for everyone and the total consumed thus varied from one to six or eight pints as a 'normal' drink on these occasions. In addition many people were ignorant about the strengths of drinks, with a particular uncertainty about the alcohol by volume (ABV) measure used by the drinks industry and the 'standard' strengths used to compute what is a unit of alcohol, so there was a strong chance that the perceptions they had of themselves as drinkers bore little relationship to the alcohol consumed.

In a sense, these personal uncertainties mirror those within the international alcohol industry and research community, for there is no internationally accepted 'standard drink'. (See Cooper 1999) Within the UK only when 3 medical Royal Colleges produced simultaneous reports on alcohol in 1986-7 was any notion of the UK standard disseminated and advice as to the individual 'sensible' drinking levels produced (Royal College of General Practitioners 1986, Royal College of Psychiatrists 1986, Royal College of Physicians 1987). As an historical process, the national differences must have developed from different understandings, for the definitions in use "are largely dependent on the accepted and prevailing practices in different countries." (p.67) Neither of the constructs of a drinking pattern or drinking style may express these things with clarity.

The historical aspect of peoples' diverse drinking patterns and styles was important in understanding the perceptions people have of themselves as drinkers. When explored at depth, these understandings, which shaped so much behaviour, may well be accurate but were more frequently inaccurate and led to confusion and made it difficult to understand the situation when apprehended for driving whilst under the influence of alcohol.

A generalised view of the alcohol drinking of the interviewees

Two 'broad brush' general things stood out from the above exercise. The first was that there was a very wide range of drinking behaviour amongst these men. That range extended from someone who had not begun to drink alcohol until his 38th year to others who had been daily consumers since starting to drink in the years, between 12 and 18 years, prior to the legal age for entering a public house to purchase and consume alcohol. The second matter that stood out was that drinking alcohol was not a purely random activity but had a regularity and, in general, a consistency about it that could only be described as a pattern. Yet, almost all the individuals had drinking patterns that showed considerable development, indeed variation over the years. It was thus difficult to discover, for all but a few individuals, any one single, standard or consistent pattern of drinking over time. No confident

claim can be made that this group of drinkers broke into one or more sub-groups conforming to particular and distinct patterns of drinking, for the patterns were very individual.

But if there is one frequent broad outline shape, though not discrete stages, within which different patterns developed it has the following general characteristics. Drinking commenced as a teenager. This earliest drinking was, probably, with friends of the same gender going out on one or two evenings a week, usually at the weekends. This was seen as the "thing to do" at that age and was perceived as a part of the young male find-a-partner culture. This stage of drinking often began slowly, due to lack of available finance and only developed further with age, in terms of going out more frequently and/or drinking more on the occasions when out socialising. Movement into the next stage, in this general progression, occurred once a female partner was found and a relationship began to develop. (Power and Estaugh 1990) Then people went out less often and, on more of the occasions when they went out drinking, they went with the partner and consumed less alcohol than when in an all male group. For those who did settle into a stable relationship that produced children, it was common to state that 'going out drinking' became an infrequent social occasion when the partners went out together with friends in a similar position. This was only once a week, or fortnight or even an infrequent special arrangement that was dependent upon the availability of suitable child care. In terms of the previous drinking, consumption at this stage was almost always of more modest amounts. Some witnessed to the continuation of such a stage until, with a combination of increased available money and children growing out of dependency stages, there was opportunity once more to undertake drinking activities purely for their own pleasure.

Finance was one driving force in these different stages for assorted patterns developed depending on whether people were saving in order to buy their own home in which to settle together, renting a home or living with relatives; the manner in which such homes might be fitted out with their own furnishings; the activities, sports or pursuits that were followed; or had other ideals that took a part of the available finance. (Brinkley 1999) Thus I needed to recognise that circumstances largely directed the progress from one stage to another and the development of different patterns of drinking in any one stage.

The later stage, when people had settled down, varied considerably depending, for example, on whether the person was pursuing some hobby, further study, an activity such as sailing or community enhancing and supporting work such as working with the Scouts. In these circumstances, whether drinking took place and its nature was frequently associated with the activity undertaken. Such drinking was largely a subsidiary event to the main social activity. These people talked about 'calling for a pint' at the end of the evening after the activity had finished, or of not going out because of pursuing the particular interest. If there was no such activity or hobby, simply going out to the pub to meet with other male friends and 'have a drink' became, for some, a regular, or an avoided, feature of some mid-week evenings, whilst the man and his partner continued to go out at weekends for shared activities that included drinking or of which the purpose was to drink and socialise with family or friends.

Those interviewed were little different from the community at large regarding the permanence of their personal relationships and those whose partnerships ended almost consistently reported a dramatic change in their drinking. They witnessed to an entirely different character to their drinking occasions. Outside a relationship and the ties that bound to a family home, many resumed a way of drinking that was

theirs prior to their relationship commencing. Once again they went out on many more occasions each week and bonded with male companions in the context of the public house and drinking. The distress at the ending of relationships was clearly considerable and many men could not cope with remaining alone in their living accommodation, which in some cases was not adequate and had few comforts. So many preferred to go out to drink with the friends that remained or sought to re-establish old friendships rather than watch television alone. When relationships ended, the nature of drinking was also subject to change in that there did not seem to be the restraint occasioned by having a partner to return to, so there was much to encourage drinking in greater quantities and for longer periods of time than had been the case for a number of years.

This variation in drinking had, for some, been repeated on a number of occasions as they developed successive relationships with more than one female partner. Some remarried and as this new partnership continued, a reduced level of drinking once again became the norm. For others the relationships that developed were not permanent, though that may well have been the hope or expectation, and if and when they broke down the cycle of disillusion or distress and seeking relief from those feelings (Cockerham et al 1989) by drinking with male companions, was repeated, sometimes again and again. Within the general framework of these lifestyle stages many different patterns of drinking developed. These did not necessarily remain consistent but also varied as people moved through lifestyle stages and adopted different drinking customs.

It was therefore not surprising that the conceptions people had of themselves as drinkers were often imprecise (Perkins and Berkowitz 1987) and had the same fluidity as their drinking configuration. It was easy for someone to see himself as a very modest and occasional drinker, as he had been whenever he had been in a stable relationship, but not to acknowledge that there had been other times, albeit short periods, in his life when he had been a daily drinker consuming amounts that would consistently bring him to and beyond the legal driving limit. It was possible, in such circumstances, consistently to hold the view that any 'excessive' drinking and the behaviour that accompanied it was a feature of the earliest adolescent drinking – long since left behind with greater maturity and added life experiences. Such a view did not recognise that there had been other periods when that pattern of drinking had once again been adopted even in mature years – for, deep down, they felt such a lifestyle was 'not me'. Such drinking, along with other aspects of life, merely filled a gap when the 'real me' was not living as someone who was wanted in his own house, living as part of a family, which was felt to be the 'real me'.

The perceptions of the vast majority were that they were 'modest' drinkers were also supported, in their view, by at least two other factors. The first was that the only benchmark they had against which to measure their drinking was the imprecise notion of an 'alcoholic'. Some interviewees spoke of not being an 'alcoholic' and the wider group of offenders amongst whom I have been working also used the same terminology and reference point. Yet, none were clear as to what the term actually meant other than that it was an amount of alcohol regularly consumed or a condition or way of drinking in which the speaker did not participate. The 'alcoholic' had characteristics that never belonged to the speaker though what those characteristics were had wide variation and were not clearly understood. This was a dilemma shared by the scientific community for Babor and Dolinsky (1988) claimed that "despite more than a century of research and speculation, alcohol typology theorists are still struggling... to construct a scientific methodology that will bring order out of the complexity that is alcoholism". In seeking to obtain clear

characteristics of the concept by using advanced statistical methods, with a sample of 277 alcohol abusers voluntarily seeking treatment, Peters (1997) worked "with 102 symptoms reflecting various aspects of alcoholism" and a "cluster procedure failed to show any fitting categorical model." Thus it was not too surprising that few of these drinking drivers saw themselves as anything other than 'ordinary' and indeed modest consumers of alcohol.

The second factor was that most drinkers interviewed had regularly witnessed other drinkers consuming more than themselves, (Perkins 2002) for example Dave, a daily drinker capable of consuming in excess of 100 units a week said, "I do know people who drink more than I do, so you know.... you want to see BS, he's 23 stone and he has sort of 2 gallons or something like that before he goes out for a Saturday night". Witnessing others drinking was so often the only comparison people made to measure their consumption and on that basis understood it as 'modest', 'normal', even 'heavy'. Observing someone drinking well in excess of oneself was a sure sign and cast iron evidence that a 'modest drinker' self-perception was accurate.

As already mentioned a further imprecise measure that led to perceptual confusion was a limited and inaccurate understanding of what constitutes a standard drink. (See Cooper 1999) The make up of a unit of alcohol was not accurately understood. For the majority, who drank beer, lager or less frequently cider, the unit measure was a pint. This is between 2 and 5 times the standard measure! Hence, their understanding of the legal limit for driving, was expressed in terms of so many pints and was almost certainly a considerable over estimate. Alcohol strength, expressed as an Alcohol By Volume measure, and varying between, for regular drinks, 3.5% to 9%, was largely unknown. These people drank the brands they liked or were accustomed to and not a particular alcohol strength. How the drink usually taken related to alcohol strength was, for the majority, a matter of disinterest, little relevance and an arcane topic.

A further implicit measure of excessive or inappropriate drinking was the behaviour associated with inebriation. For most people this related to brawls or fights, an inability to get home safely or to communicate clearly. These were either behaviours that these drinkers understood as applying to themselves on rare occasions when getting drunk was their intention or, and more likely, actions that might have been part of their earliest drinking as young men, and young men who were wild or stupid contrary to the Social Issues Research Centre Oxford (1998).

Hence, if the only idea of inappropriate or problem causing drinking was the imprecise notion of an 'alcoholic' allied to which there was no accurate idea of a standard drink nor way of calculating consumption other than by observing others, who drank more than yourself, and your consumption caused you no personal difficulty – it was very likely, if not imperative, that one was, by definition, a 'normal' or 'modest' drinker on all but the rarest of occasions. For those with such a construction there was unlikely to be any realistic, accepted or recognised controlling measure of personal total alcohol consumption on any timescale. If this was coupled with no clear understanding of what was a standard drink, nor of how many such drinks equates to the legal limit for driving, there was unlikely to be any realistic measure of control of one's drinking on any single occasion.

Conclusions

Drinking for these men was largely a leisure activity associated with socialising with friends, colleagues, acquaintances and family. (Alcohol and Society 2001) Everyone had a personal way of conducting the drinking whether it was an occasional drink or drinking every day. This has been expressed as a drinking pattern and such patterns, as Guy, expressed it to me, "It's very difficult to say how that happened ... a sort of gradual process that ... a pattern that you just sort of fall into." Thus, not only are drinking patterns very individual, often they are not worked out, thought through or planned. Likewise any individual may have more than one pattern operating at the same time such as; the two nights mates met at the pub pattern, plus Friday afternoon when colleagues had a drink together after work pattern and a Saturday night out with my wife pattern and so forth. Each pattern may have had a different location for drinking, a different quantity of alcohol attached to it and even a different type of drink as when someone only drinks wine when out for a meal with his partner. These patterns happened and changed, depending on the lifestyle and circumstances of the individual. Such changes may be slow and gradual or rapid depending on life changes. This was especially true if key personal relationships broke down or were lost through death or separation. Some patterns were deliberately chosen in that some drinking was avoided in order not to mix alcohol and work or alcohol and driving. To quote Guy again, as a HGV driver he was very clear that he did not drink during the day but added, with a smile, "Quite the reverse when I'm not, at night."

As this chapter has shown as well as drinking patterns there were drinking styles that linked, in many different combinations, to the drinking patterns that these men adopted. As with drinking patterns, drinking styles were very individual but showed wide variation between individuals. The location of drinking was often closely related to a particular drinking pattern because the same friends were met in the same place occasion after occasion. Other locations were much more randomly chosen as when out celebrating, or eating a meal, or night clubbing. In the same way the people with whom one drank also changed in a similar manner. Drinking styles did not directly relate to drinking patterns but different styles operated within any one pattern. The drinking style was probably linked strongly to the way a person was introduced to drinking, the purpose of that early drinking, the manner in which and by whom the introduction was effected. There were many other factors associated with life, employment, relationships, bereavements indeed a whole range of meaningful experiences that pushed toward drinking and affected the drinking style of any one person. (Bales 1962)

There seemed to be little conception of safe or sensible drinking as a controlling device for any drinking pattern or style that was adopted. In the case of four of the subjects, whose drinking had led to serious health problems, their drinking patterns continued, in spite of severe warnings to alter and reduce their drinking, and statements from three that they had stopped drinking altogether (Colin, Nigel, Vince). Paul acknowledged that he had not "been able to go dry." That was not to say that decisions to change a way of drinking, even abstain from drinking were not taken for a variety of reasons. Some felt no more than the need for a change, others became worried about some aspect of their drinking, whilst others stopped because they could not afford it. As I have shown above there were personal rules that directed some of the drinking patterns and styles adopted. But most of the personal rules chosen by these subjects were only associated with patterns or styles relating to 'going out for a drink' and did not encapsulate or cover all occasions of drinking alcohol. These occasions could be as central a part of some drinking pattern as any other aspect but simply not recognised as such.

I began by suggesting that these subjects needed to be examined as drinkers. In so doing I have seen a multiplicity of aspects of their alcohol consumption but the overriding feeling was that it was not their drinking that distinguished them. They were a wide cross section of men experiencing a whole gamut of human events and their drinking was, whether they understood it or not, very responsive to those experiences.

6 INFATUATED – WITH CARS, DRIVING OR CONVENIENCE

The general context

As I moved to consider the men as drivers, it was necessary to reflect on the context in which they had experienced their driving. They ranged in age from 20 to 69 years at interview, giving birth dates from 1926. The oldest man was 17 years of age and eligible to take his driving test in 1943. This was the middle of the 1939 – 1945 war, when few private individuals were tested. The youngest was eligible to take his test in 1978. This period of 35 years was one that saw an exponential growth in the availability, popularity and use of motor vehicles of all types and by a steadily increasing segment of the adult population (see National Travel Surveys). Also the amount of roads and their nature increased and developed, as elaborated in Chapter 1 (DETR 2000). These developments have gone along with a corresponding reliance on motor transport for so many ordinary activities of daily life to a point at which, for some, to leave their home meant to enter a car and drive. It was thus of little surprise that so many of this group of men indicated, by as many non-verbal clues as verbal statements, that they were an integral part of a culture that might be said have experienced an infatuation with the motor vehicle and all the corollaries that accompanied its development.

I was, however, more interested in trying to understand the perceived social norms held by these men about driving and drink driving, their attitudes to cars and driving, the beliefs held about themselves as drivers and the expectations they had about owning cars. As we shall see I was surprised at disjunctions between some of the attitudes and beliefs and actual driving practise.

Variation in the group size

The size of 48 was reduced, for the majority of this analysis, to between 45 and 47 because of the way in which some chose to respond to the interview. For example, there was no information recorded for 2 respondents. Brian concentrated solely on the dramatic events relating to his offence and there was no discussion of the generality of his driving. The interview of Frank was inaudible due to interference on the tape and, whilst I produced an immediate record of the interview, I did not recall and did not make notes of the details but only the generality of his driving history. However, Frank was a police officer who drove as a part of his normal duties and had trained as a police driver! There were also some minor variations in numbers analysed because some people did not refer to all aspects of their driving experience. As an example, for over 25 years Guy had operated a small transport business and his usual practice was to take his HGV tractor unit and park it close to his home. Thus he was not included in any responses concerning having a vehicle in order to drive to and from work. One driver, Neil, had such a varied career of which, as a younger man, a large part had been spent abroad, and only his later years had been spent back in the UK. As these elements were so different, he was recorded twice for some aspects of this analysis.

In their interviews the respondents covered many aspects of driving. Their responses have been analysed in the following terms.

Driving prior to the legal age

Some 6 of the drivers indicated that they had experience of driving before they reached the legal age for so doing. Guy recalled being on holiday with his older brother in 1956, and that "to see two cars in Scotland, blimey! you know – and he taught me to drive on the lonely Scottish roads, wearing his flat cap to look older! And then ... umm ... he went to live in a place called S--, a little village, just outside G--and there was a disused aerodrome, it had been an American base during the war, and I learned to drive there." He pointed out that his driving was soon rather more extensive, and illegal, for "I used to go Friday night and come back Sunday night. I use to drive to G-- and drive back; before I got a licence." Jim said, referring to a decade later, "I had a motorbike at 13 but obviously I couldn't ride it on the road" and Ben recognised that he "was driving from ... I could drive properly from 15" though he did not expand on this experience. Also, Dick told how in 1973 in "the years from being 16 to 21, before I started drinking, I were in a garage, somebody's garage like for 3 to 4 nights a week, as much as I could, learning to ride motorbikes, messing with cars, all sorts. So I was driving on waste land, legally off road bikes this kind of stuff." Sam told how he had "been driving illegally for years without a licence, with just a provisional licence, driving on my own" – this would be in 1980-85. If this was illegal driving, Ken, at the same time and before he was 17, explained that "a lot of people have got farms and a few of them had Beetles and the like which we used to drive around fields after their harvest." In every decade there were some who were so keenly interested in driving motorbikes and cars that they were ready to experiment often without real tuition. If it were possible to undertake that experimenting away from the roads, they did so but, failing that opportunity, some used the roads.

A strong desire to be with cars and driving

The desire to drive was very strong in these men. (compare National Travel Surveys) 39 passed the driving test when aged 17 or 18. A further three took and passed the test by the age of 20 or 21, a further three around the age of 24 or 25 and the remaining three men later, at around the age of 28. Such a simple analysis did not show the full complexity and keenness of the men to drive. For example, Sam, who passed his full test in his late twenties, also indicated that he was driving prior to the age of 17. Apart from those already mentioned who experimented by driving motorbikes or cars, but generally off the roads and in one case abroad, there were practical and financial reasons that kept some from driving when they would have wished to do so had circumstances been different. Joe, aged 69, was brought up in Poland and had no opportunity to drive until he was in Italy during the Second World War. This was when he first qualified as a driver, though he later had to take a UK test. Service in the armed forces gave some the opportunity for which they longed. For others, who were legally able to drive, their service in the forces was a time of not driving at all. This early onset of driving, occurring irrespective of the age of the respondent, probably indicated more than an interest but keenness, so that money was saved, time spent and priorities changed in order to enable driving to become a reality. This interest seems to have two elements, both expressed by Ray as "I've stripped and rebuilt so many cars that I can't count. I've always been involved and enjoyed being with cars, so I enjoy driving, and have had some driving jobs." Here he indicated both an interest in cars and the mechanics of them, as well as an interest and pleasure in driving as such. The interest in the mechanics of the motor vehicle may also have extended to trading in cars. This was expressed by Eric, who said, "we used to buy and sell a few cars – a pal of mine who was a motor mechanic. We were very interested in cars, in doing them up and

spending time working on them and even driving them.” But the combination of these two elements was not always present for, whilst some enjoy building or rebuilding the mechanics, and thus perhaps the buying and selling of cars, others have more interest in the driving experience itself rather than any other aspect of utilising a vehicle.

The interest in cars, in whatever form, did not always relate to or include early driving skill because, whilst some witnessed to passing the test on the first occasion and even of having limited instruction and pre-test driving experience, others had to take the test on a few occasions before they passed. One such is Alex who recorded taking the test four times before he was successful. A different story: “Well I passed my test on October 22nd 1974, which was approximately just over five months after my seventeenth birthday. I had ten lessons and an hour before my test and that’s the only driving I had, I wasn’t allowed to drive my father’s car because it was a company car” was the recollection of Dave who went on to drive many thousands of miles as a sales representative. Sid was dissimilar in that he “started driving when I was 16 years old on a motorbike and took my test as soon as I could. I got through first time and have always had a car available to me.” These differences with the driving test probably related more to the teaching and preparation for the test than to any desire to qualify as a driver, or to their later experience as drivers, or their offending history.

The car as a symbol

Another aspect of the driving experience, remarked upon by 3, was the sense of status in addition to, rather than exclusively, the pleasure that they gained from being drivers. Brian expressed this when he recounted his success in business, for he stated his salary and added that he “drove a BMW, played golf with good people”, in his view concomitants of the successful. It was different for Dick, for he desired a sports car: “[I] always wanted something a bit sporty and I thought that were the right age, brilliant and I just went about it...” but the car was more for him to show off in than to serve any other purpose! The sense of fulfilment that came from having a car to drive was more generalised. This was seen for Andy. The car he used was not his but his father’s, and he explained, “to young people at the moment and for people say 18 to 25, and even up to 30, you know the car is such an important part of your life ... because of the freedom it gives you.” (See Burkitt 1991 for descriptions of symbolic interactionism and analysis of Mead)

The men witnessed to the considerable value they placed on the ability to drive for people spoke of taking every step possible to drive as soon as it was legally and practically possible. Not all were able to have a vehicle available to them from the moment of passing the driving test, but they desired to have the ability and the legal sanction to drive whenever the opportunity presented itself to them. So strong was this that two simply spoke of using their car for ‘everything’, one of whom, Alex, not only had something “a bit special” as a car but “even if I step out of the house its into the car straightaway. Even to go down to the shops its in the car.” Others, too, witnessed to the automatic use of the car. If they left their homes it was to get into the car and drive, whether this was going to work or a hundred yards down the road. The aspect of “emotionally wanting to drive” and enjoying driving was, for Ed, made more important by the fact that his wife had a disability and “sometimes she just physically can’t drive because of her legs, so I used to take her everywhere”.

The purposes of car ownership

In the interviews an attempt was made to ascertain the reasons for and the significance to each driver of their ability to have the use of a car. This was done by asking about the use they made of their vehicles as well as the start of their driving careers. When reasons for having and using a car are explored, it was a matter of some surprise that, after all the desire to be driving and the emotional feelings generated by driving, the main reason offered for owning and using a car was the utilitarian one of enabling the person to get to and from work though this included other utilitarian purposes and fulfilling social or pleasure drives that were considered necessary (see Commission for Integrating Traffic 2001). It was not a matter of accepting a norm or 'joining the crowd'. Almost all spoke not only of using their car to drive to and from work but also the necessity to do so.

Convenience was the reason given by the majority group of 18 drivers. This started at school for Ken, who was attending "a Higher Education College in a town ten miles away so I used to drive there every day", and included Jim, who worked awkward shifts and lived "about 13 miles" from his place of work. A further group of five spoke of having awkward journeys to travel. Ian, who travelled some 9 miles outside the city to work, and Pat, worked on opencast mining sites to which travel by public transport could well have been impossible are examples. For two of this group, the nature of their work required them to travel long distances, perhaps to sites anywhere in the country. Whilst they may not have used the vehicle once they arrived at the site, they clearly could not operate efficiently without the vehicle to transport them to the operational site. As Will explained, "we were sub-contracting see, working with my Dad" and the car was a utility vehicle rather than used for pleasure, for "I never used it for pleasure ... very rare." Similar conditions applied to another 10% who, in addition to requiring their vehicle to get to work, also made some use of their vehicle at work. This could be occasional, as for the legal executive who travelled to see clients or to a distant court rather than work in his office; frequent, for the Local Government Officer whose authority required him to visit sites throughout the city; or regular and consistent, as for the Post Office engineer who travelled widely every day, within his extensive area, to maintain or repair broken facilities. Neil, classified later for the time he spent working abroad, when back in the UK and office based used his car for some travel to sites away from the office. Yet only two were provided with company vehicles. For Paul this was a van used "purely for deliveries, the van driver took it." But "I just had it, it was a perk the company allowed" to be used for getting to and from work and for his personal, social use.

Two artisans, Leo and Nigel, carried tools or materials with them to their work, although they may only have used the vehicle infrequently once they arrived at the worksite. Joe was a shopkeeper who used his vehicle to collect and re-stock his supplies from the cash and carry depots he used. Two others, Owen and Tom, used their own or their employer's vehicles to transport colleagues to and from the worksite which may be "up and down the country sometimes when we were on the power stations might be in Scotland for a few months and then London, Wales or anywhere."

Another six spoke of necessary use in connection with their particular business activities. Harry was a DJ travelling many miles a week, often late at night, to venues. Gary, a financial consultant, travelled to visit clients and Ben was a businessman, whose activities defied further definition, but he travelled around seeing people and the businesses with which he traded. Giles was a young male

student who did not use his vehicle during the week to get to and from his residence to the University, but did, as an officer in the Territorial Army preparing to go into the Army, travel to courses, camps and training sites almost every weekend. This was the major use he made of his car. Neil, for whom driving has "been a basic part of my life" was also included in this group for he spent many years working abroad, as an engineer, in the Antarctic, South America and the USA where "straight out of town it was dirt tracks", and he always had to use a vehicle to get to the out of the way sites. He would often transport his staff or materials.

The basic motivation in owning and using a car for these people was the convenience or indeed necessity to conduct the business of their working lives. There was little correlation with their enjoyment or otherwise of driving. Though some had leisure pursuits that took them travelling across the country in order to sail, fish, climb or walk for which the car was necessary. As with Neil who was "always a keen walker, rock climber and a sailor" and so, in this country, trips "to Scotland were frequent, weekend trips when we'd drive up on Friday night and come back on Sunday night – with several drivers relaying", and Bill, whose interest was "dingy racing and that's like twenty miles away". On the other hand there were some who used their vehicles to get to and from work, and then parked them and did not use them for any socialising activity at all, especially when this was largely confined to drinking with mates in the pub and club. For example, Alex, for whom the car "is number one on the list" and whose girlfriend complained that 'his car is more important to him than she is', nevertheless parked his car up throughout the weekends, "As soon as Friday when I finish work it was parked up and I don't touch it until Monday, going back to work." We shall see that in reality there was a lot of variation in the behaviour of these car owners, but that did not diminish the sense that ownership of a car was undertaken for utilitarian purposes and the convenience a vehicle offered in pursuit of daily employment.

In view of the high value placed on use of a vehicle for work I attempted to analyse whether the use was 'at work' or 'for work', and whether this related to a dependence or reliance upon their cars. This had not been specifically explored in interview and was impossible to determine from the analysis. At or for work was a somewhat arbitrary distinction but seemed to have significance for some, such as those who were trained craftsmen, but had no meaning for others, such as self-employed businessmen. Two were provided with company cars. Those for whom the distinction had significance were clear. If they drove 'for their work' it was required, which seemed to mean being paid and classified as a driver. Others made use of the vehicle 'at work', and this did not usually include payment and was not recognised by their employer as a part of their job.

Thirty-one people discussed this in terms such as using the vehicle for "everything" or convenience or because journeys were awkward or of great distance. Others simply said they use it at work or for business or to carry tools, materials or people. To analyse these matters further I attempted to clarify whether the use was required for work or simply used at work by constructing a simple 5-point scale from their replies, using the categories of: Occasional, Helpful, Useful, Necessary, Essential. Whether the use made of the vehicle was 'at work' or required for work almost everyone scored their use as either necessary, in the sense that if circumstances required, the vehicle was used and the circumstance entirely determined the use made, or essential, in the sense that the job could not be performed satisfactorily without a vehicle.

The two people who claimed that they used their car for 'everything' did not actually use the vehicle at all at work! Two thirds of those who used their car to get to and

from work also used the car at or for work. Of those who used the car at work, two, Mark and Chris used it only occasionally at work, and Joe used it to carry goods for his business. Tony, a legal executive, used his car on some occasions though he was generally office bound. But the remainder of those who categorised their use as 'necessary' or 'essential' to their work. This clarified and extended their conception of the use of the vehicle to travel to work, and transformed the character of 'convenience'. In the case of Dick, a craftsman, it influenced the type of car he used. As he said, "My father always said to me, "have a van, always have a van" and I never understood why, but now I do. Because people with cars can't carry stuff but with a van you can carry stuff and go where you want – estates are ideal, that's why I've got one now. Estates are the business." In addition to having awkward journeys to and from work, Ian, a mechanic, was out posted from his garage to "T-W--s, not actually working for W--s, but still for the garage, for 13 years so I was backwards and forwards while I was working there". Similarly Colin could not have pursued his singing career without making use of his vehicle for this 'work'. Others were either carrying tools (Leo) or people (Tom, Owen) at work, as well as to and from work.

As might be anticipated for those who were required to use their vehicles for work, four people felt it was 'necessary' use, though two (Vic, Neil, when in the UK) only defined their journey to and from work as convenient. The largest group of eleven people, however they characterised their journey to and from work, in fact needed the vehicle as an essential part of their work.

This sub group, some 42 of the total, only two, Mark and Chris, could be said to make minimal use of the car at work and they used it mainly for its convenience to travel to and from work. Mark, as a building craftsman, travelled to different building sites for his work and these could be difficult of access on some occasions. Chris worked shifts and the convenience factor for him was high. All the remainder, whatever the nature of the journey to and from work, considered they had to use the vehicle as a necessary or essential part of their work. This entire sub group used their car in relation to their work and its use was regarded as having high value. Loss of their licence had severe consequences for them and indicated the significance use of a vehicle has for the majority.

The amount of driving undertaken

The amount of driving undertaken by these drivers was considerable but not usually expressed in miles per annum, where the National Travel Surveys found about 5,000 miles to be the average. There were large variations between individuals and within the same person's experience over time. The variations went from Leo, for whom "It were very rare I walked anywhere. I've always been with a car so [laugh] I don't think I caught a bus in five year, since I were driving". Apart from the professional drivers, some totalled their annual mileage as "about 20,000 miles" (Bill) or Harry at "about 300 miles a week", but the vast majority thought in terms of daily use as did Tom, who "had the firms van, or wagon or whatever" or Fred "when I first got my licence I was using my Dad's pickup" prior to purchasing his own car. Others felt it in terms of the necessity. As Clive expressed it, "I'd get a phone call at 2 in the morning, 'Right, we need you in Portsmouth, for 9 o'clock in the morning. So get there.' So that is what it [the vehicle] was for."

Of the 48 drivers, only two, Andy, a student who did not then own a car but had use of his taxi driving father's car, and Vince, a young man whose father placed firm restrictions on his driving in case he were to drink and then drive, did not rate their

use of the car as either of utilitarian or pleasurable value. In fact Vince used the car to get to and from work on what was an awkward journey for him. Andy would rate owning and using a car as a high priority once he achieved employment after leaving university. Apart from him there is not a single person interviewed for whom the car did not have either a high utilitarian value in relation to their work or gained a high degree of pleasure in its use or in the activities that it allowed people to undertake.

There were periods when some of these drivers did not drive for a variety of reasons. As a student away from Sheffield, Mick judged that, after a year of driving since he qualified to drive, "I didn't need transport" and was for six years without it. Similarly Sid, although he had driven whilst not qualified to do so, gave that up because he "worked with me brothers and they took me like to work and brought me home." Eventually it was family pressure that made him qualify as a driver. Quite a number had been banned from driving for offences other than drink driving. Two of the younger drivers recognised that they had had limited opportunity to drive because of driving disqualification by the courts. Although these driving bans had considerably reduced the availability of their vehicles to them, they both spoke highly of the importance to them of having a vehicle. But some of these multiple offenders had periods of disqualification so great as to reduce markedly the ability to drive. As Walt summarised his own situation, "Well, I've had my licence for 8 years and out of that eight years I've probably actually had it for three." These may be some of the reasons why very few made comparison with the average number of miles driven by the general population of drivers. This did not seem to be a criterion that had much relevance to these drivers. For them the value of the car did not reside in the number of miles driven.

Each person viewed their driving as individual to themselves and thought of it in isolation from matters of skill or competence, the mileage travelled each year and the status a particular vehicle gave them. Having a vehicle and being able to use it to travel in relation to their paid work seemed to be the most important valuation placed on the car.

Driving for pleasure

It seemed hard to believe that the interest in driving shared by these drivers, who experimented prior to their legal ability to drive on roads, took the driving test as soon as they reached the relevant age, repaired, bought and sold cars and had much pleasure in owning a vehicle, could largely be reduced to the utilitarian value of getting to and from work. Ownership and driving appeared to be more complex, and so it proved to be. In addition to these utilitarian matters, other uses and other values had been of even greater significance to some. Comment has already been made about Ed, who liked driving and gained emotional satisfaction from it, and also had a disabled wife, who could drive but was not always fit enough to do so, and his ability to assist her was of considerable importance to him. The birth of their children had increased that importance for him.

Thirteen of these drivers loved driving as such or had a passion for cars and spent time working on them, improving or restoring them. For three of this group, who loved driving, the interest in working with cars, trading or driving them had been when they were younger and no longer applied. This still left ten of the drivers actively interested in and pursuing hobbies related to cars at the time of their offence. Typical of these people was Colin, who classed himself as a "very keen motorist, you know, classic car enthusiast, type of thing. Always had an interest in

cars, tinkering with cars." Also Leo, whose friends played pool but "I was more interested in the cars, 'cos I like messing about with cars so I didn't ... I spent all me money on me cars." This was similar to Ray, who "did motor technology at school" and has thus the ability to strip and rebuild cars. For others such as Chris, it was the actual driving that counted, for "I must have driven thousands and thousands and thousands of miles. I had five VW Beetles one after another ... and then we went on to Nissans or Datsuns as they were called then". Similarly Ken made reference to the miles he drove each year in terms of " I mean I do a lot more than the national average a year. Usually I do a trip to Switzerland, drive to Switzerland every year on a skiing holiday." From a rugby family, he had "actually volunteer[ed] to drive" his father and friends to international matches "in London, at Twickenham, or Wales or Scotland", so it was no surprise that, if " I was sat around in an evening", he thought nothing of "picking up the phone, speaking to somebody in London and then driving to London that night. I mean I'm quite used to just get up and go. It doesn't faze me at all." Perhaps the reflection of Jack offered a summary of the way many considered driving, "I love driving. Maybe I should've been a taxi driver or something, I don't think it'd be that good fun, you know, if you had to do it as a job."

For others, their leisure pursuits of climbing, dinghy sailing, walking, scouting, making regular summer weekend trips to caravans at the coast or North York moors could not generally have been accomplished without the use of the car. Some, however, did discover that, when they were banned, friends and family rallied round and assisted them to continue their leisure activities. Of those who are not included in the group of drivers who find utilitarian value in their car use, four Jim, Ken, Walt and Alan expressed pleasure and interest in cars and so indicated the high value they placed upon them. This value either resided in the ownership of the car or the use they were able to make of it, as in the example of Ken, delighting in his ability to decide late at night to go from Sheffield to visit friends in London, and his pleasure in driving part way through the night to achieve this. Unsurprisingly both the people, who used their car for 'everything', also rated it high in terms of pleasure and interest in cars.

Driving competence

It was surprising that with a group of drivers, who were highly motivated to own and drive vehicles and gave high scores to the convenience value of using their vehicles to get to and from work, only seven of them spoke in interview of their competence as drivers. The terms in which competence was assessed was at least interesting and perhaps of concern. For three men this was defined in terms of not having accidents. This definition was not always as clear as might be assumed. As Colin reported, "So I've [been] driving all that time and I'd never had an accident until that one. That was one of the ... probably had ... when I say no accidents ... I've had a little scrape parking it into ... not another car. I'd not had an accident not with another car or anything." Likewise for Harry the definition has some variability, for he recognised some responsibility for an accident in 1968, when "they altered the law on roundabouts, you know on the roundabout you give way, don't you? Well I was on the roundabout and a kid came round in a Morris 1000 and he took me front bumper off. So that was like 50 – 50." Neither did he count as an accident, though the description is somewhat uncertain, a later incident when "I had parked me car and was just getting out of it when a guy came hurtling down the road .. um .. in a Sierra, an old Sierra, reversing and he took me wing off and I was parked up in the car!" Others define their competence in more positive terms. Dave considered himself "a reasonable driver" because "If I drive with somebody else ... if I am

sitting in the front seat I am always looking 3 or 4 cars ahead whereas they are looking at the tail lights of the car in front or something, and ... I do see situations arising and I tend to react, even if I am in the passenger seat." For Paul, speed was determined by the conditions rather than any set speed limits, even though this meant that in a 30 mph zone, when there was nothing about, he might travel at 40, 45 or even 50 miles per hour. The inevitable consequence was that "I've had numerous speeding tickets, yes, I'm afraid." For Otto, the criteria was that he passed his driving test at the first attempt after "only 13 lessons" and later also "passed my bus test first time" and spent 5 years as a bus driver. Ray had competed in "motor sport wise at auto grass racing and whatever", enjoyed it and, as a result, considered himself "quite a good driver". Whereas for Dick matters were rather more tested. He admitted that he had driven "without due care and attention, absolutely as fast as it can go, as fast as it can go round roundabouts, everything", though this was in older slower cars than now! Having explored the potentiality of cars and thus tested his skill and also made driving a part of his leisure activities, he considered himself a "careful driver when I'm getting to work". He has always thought to himself that "I've read the road better." And "I've tried to foresee other people and what they're going to do ... I've always tried to keep one step ahead." These drivers were therefore like the majority of drivers who have no clear criteria by which to measure their driving ability, and assumed that, because they avoided traffic accidents or took a special interest and drove off road, they had acquired skills greater than most other drivers.

Attitudes to driving

There was some ambivalence in the attitudes to driving of the vast majority of this group of drivers. On the one hand, as we have seen, they were interested in cars, wanted to own one, to drive regularly and as soon as possible. For some the interest stretched to re-building and mechanically repairing or restoring vehicles, to which might be added the additional spice of selling the renewed vehicle at a profit. Driving in conditions away from other traffic, whether in isolated places or when traffic density was low gave pleasure. To this was added the enjoyment of being able to undertake some desired activity, whether a hobby or a family activity, by virtue of having a vehicle to drive. Some also gained added satisfaction by having a particular car in which the driver was noticed and gained prestige. Yet on the other hand the purpose of owning and driving their vehicles was almost entirely in relation to their getting to and from their employment. Attitudes are revealed when, for many of them, the car was 'parked up' during the weekend. This was when it was not required to get to and from work, and was personal time for leisure and drinking. However, family utilitarian journeys and those considered necessary for social reasons were made in this time, but were rarely recalled and when they were they seemed to carry little significance. Unless prompted, few mentioned driving for holidays, which was often the greatest single mileage added to many family cars.

For these drivers, with strong positive attitudes to owning and driving a car, the actual use of the bulk of their driving was simply getting to and from their work.

A case study

Reflecting upon the interview with Dave, it became clear, not so much from his spoken words, but from the explanations of his driving history, that he had two very different views of his driving. In essence, in his early 20's Dave had settled to the life of a travelling representative. As such he was provided with a company car and "was doing 30, 40, 50 thousand miles for possibly, well for ten years basically".

Within his years on the road, he had different jobs culminating in being responsible for and covering the whole of the North of England. He explained to me that "when I progressed through to working and stuff like this I became a teatime drinker." So his day consisted of leaving his hotel, driving to whatever clients he wished to see and ending the working day at another hotel, where he would stay the night. He also explained how as a daily drinker he was clear that alcohol and driving did not mix and thus it was unlikely for him to have a drink during these working days. Once he had arrived at the hotel for the evening it was a different matter – the car was parked, Dave was only going to the hotel restaurant to eat and he enjoyed drinking throughout the evening. He may well have been over the limit next morning but he explained, "I wasn't actually aware of that type of situation." This pattern continued for many years and was consistently kept because of his concern about not being a drinking driver – after all his livelihood depended on being able to drive.

His working pattern changed and, prior to his offence, Dave became a Financial Adviser, operating almost entirely within the Southern third of Sheffield. As such his working day was very different and much less structured than when he had been a representative. He moved around his social circle with an eye to gaining business. That was true whether he was playing rugby football or enjoying a drink in his local pub. He kept himself fit by going to the gym at the leisure club, playing tennis, rugby and cricket. He met people he knew in these places and discussed possible business. If he had an interview with someone he used these venues, local bars or clubs as places to meet, over a drink or lunch, and conduct his business.

When Dave joined the DDR course and for the first time kept a diary of his daily drinking, he was shattered to discover that he was consuming in excess of 100 units of alcohol per week. So surprised was he, that he quickly took steps to reduce this and halved that quantity. He was able to square this drinking behaviour with his concern not to lose his licence through drink driving because on the one hand he was not really aware of the extent of his drinking. On the other hand, he had a relaxed attitude towards that drinking because, as a financial adviser, "most of the business I did was through personal contact. So [in] going out for a drink at different establishments ..." he was not really driving. His total annual mileage was nothing compared to his previous high figures. He was not provided with a company car, but used his own. He never drove anywhere but just popped from home to club or gym, for lunch or an appointment no more than 10 to 15 minutes away. This much I knew in general about Dave before we met in his home for the interview. At the interview he explained that he had changed his job again and was once more acting as a representative, though only locally. But his boss, based in Nottingham, could telephone him at any time to say he wanted Dave to go and see a potential client at a specified later time that day, and because those meetings could be at distances of between 10 and 30 miles, Dave could be "driving a fair amount of distances for a living, then I wouldn't want to do it anyway to jeopardise myself or anyone else". He was no longer drinking in the day at all for was once again he was driving.

As we parted, the realisation dawned that sitting in a vehicle and making it travel along the highway may be either 'driving' or, if it was within the locality, 'just popping to...' About the 'driving', care was taken and one of the aspects considered was that of drinking and driving. The other occasions, not being construed as driving, did not require such care or consideration, for it was somehow not real driving. I recognised the same distinction in my own driving when we were first advised to wear seat belts. This was clearly sensible and accepted for long journeys, 'driving', but a bit of a nuisance, so not worn, when we were just on those short journeys popping somewhere or another. Others have helped me to see the

same point when they have travelled 100, 150, 250 even 300 miles on a single day and, when they have arrived at the pub 200 metres from home, have cheerfully pulled in for a drink because the driving for that day was over. The last few hundred metres did not count as driving!

As there was drinking that was considered because it was 'going for a drink', so there was driving that was considered and thought about as driving. Likewise as there was 'making a vehicle move on the highway' that was not thought of or considered as driving, so there was also occasions when alcohol was consumed that were not thought of as 'drinking'. Both were powerful constructions.

Conclusions

At the end of this examination of the driving characteristics of these men, the strong conclusion I drew is that it was not the 'car', nor interest in it, nor driving as such that were the formulating triggers to actual driving use and behaviour, but rather a range of life-style factors. These cohered around the location of the workplace and the length and timing of the working day, with relationships and their characteristics also having significance. Whilst there was little mention of matters such as disposable income or holidays, they must also have been factors in the purchase and use that many made of their vehicles.

The high utilitarian value that the use of the car held for these drivers, in getting to and from their work, led to two distinct constructions about driving. The driving that was considered as 'driving' was such as getting to work and driving at work, to which responsibilities or pleasure attached. This 'driving', on some journeys could well lack time or other constraints and extend over a greater distance or be a less familiar journey. As examples, different subjects reported driving family or friends to events in which they were not very interested, or through the night to London for the pleasure of it, or regularly driving to the coast or to distant caravan sites or to eating places in the Peak National park as a part of their social activities and undertaken for pleasure. Such were characterised as 'going for a drive'.

An entirely different character attached to the second construction concerning driving any short distance to undertake a minor task. This was hardly seen as real 'driving'. Such journeys were either habit or simply means of transport, and the purpose of the journey, constraints of time, weather or deadlines, the limited locality in which they were undertaken and its familiarity framed the driving experience. It was what these men did in order to complete another task or purpose.

Any alcohol consumed obviously related to both types of driving. It was often taken into consideration, as we shall see, when really 'driving' but it was far less often considered when merely using the car as a means of transport. To this we need to add the constructions referred to in the previous chapter that distinguished between 'going for a drink' and 'having a drink'. Personal rules may well not include 'having a drink' when the car is being used as a means of transport, not real 'driving'.

I regret that I was not aware of the previously reported INRETS work prior to undertaking the interviews for it would have provided a particular focus to that part of my interviews concerned with driving. Whilst this relationship will be discussed further in another chapter, it is already possible to see that this group of drivers are likely to perform on the road in very different manners depending upon their whole stance to the driving activity, the understanding they have of themselves as drivers, the use they are making of their vehicle, whether they have consumed alcohol,

whether the journey is recognised as a journey or not and whether it is then defined as a pleasure or work responsibility.

7 IDEAS ABOUT ALCOHOL AND ITS EFFECTS ON PEOPLE

If I was to understand the drink driving behaviour of these men, especially as so many indicated that it was not a deliberate choice to drink drive, I needed to explore the underlying beliefs, attitudes, values and perceived norms of the group. We shall see that many of the social constructions, relating to the behaviour of driving with alcohol in the body, that were held were based on false premises or were inaccurate. This led many to have only partial or incomplete beliefs and attitudes so that their accounts of reality were flawed. Goffman (1963), whilst dealing with the management of spoiled identity, dealt with many matters that are involved in what he termed 'social identity'. He said that we "lean on [the] anticipations we have, transforming them into normative expectations... 'in effect', a *virtual social identity* [rather than] his *actual social identity*. (p.12 authors italics) He also asserts that such normative expectations lead to stereotyping (p.68) unless we have a full set of facts (p.74). In this chapter such social constructions are explored; how the roots of and ways by which these social constructions developed lay in understandings about alcohol, beliefs; some of the common constructions held about their drinking behaviour, attitudes; the information and understanding people had of drink driving, perceived social norms, and the law, belief, and the sense they made of the experiences they shared – and how all led to constructions that were partial and incomplete. They gave a false security, which the majority felt, about the possibility of drink driving. I begin with a case study, in some depth, of one individual to explore this dimension.

A case study

Sid was 42 years of age when interviewed. He was employed as a motor engineer. He started drinking at 16 and quickly became a very heavy drinker so that by the time he was 21 he was collapsing after drinking. He was then diagnosed as having some cirrhosis and reduced his drinking considerably. He never, in his view, entirely gave up and, in fact, continued to be a heavy drinker - for during the 8 weeks of monitoring his drinking, his normal and average weekly consumption was 50 units of alcohol. At the time of his offence, his knowledge of alcohol and its effects was minimal, as measured on a simple 10 question alcohol knowledge test, where he scored 2. He had been driving for 14 years, passing his test "when I were about... 27, 28 year old" and regularly drove 25,000 miles in a light pick up truck as part of his work. This was his first drink driving conviction and he had one other driving offence.

Sid had a clear and unequivocal position with regard to drinking and driving. Asked about how the two associated in his mind he replied, "It didn't. Not like at work. I never had a drink at work but if I went down South or even to Leeds, Doncaster, Rotherham, anywhere I never had a drink whilst I was at work. 'Cos like it's a responsible job I've got to do, working on lorries and everything's got to be tightened up, taut up and like right taut and everything – so I can't afford to have a drink, no." The clarity of that vision was immediately, however, brought into question by the next sentence, the last in response to my question. He completed his statement, "But, as I say, as soon as I've finished work I used to go straight to the pub, have 3 or 4 pints, take the pick up home and then go for a drink at night."

At the completion of his daily work, "It never really entered me mind" to consider the link between alcohol and driving. When I pressed him further by repeating his

statement about not drinking at work in order to “be absolutely on top form”, which he affirmed, I went on “you are aware therefore that alcohol does things to you to put you not on top form, but you don’t translate that into the driving”. Again he confirmed that with a ‘no’. I continued, “I’m just intrigued as to how that happened and what you might have thought or not thought about it.” To which he replied, “Well I know now that drinking and driving don’t mix.”

Still trying to explore his understanding, I asked if, having consumed his “3 or 4 pints [prior to] take[ing] the pick up home”, he considered he would have been under the limit. His reply is instructive, “I think I might have been, ‘cos I always had a sandwich and that. Well I always... I believed that 2 and a half pints, but I think two and a half pints for a normal drinker, and I’m a heavy drinker and always have been and if I have a sandwich and then 3 or 4 pints and that then I’d be alright.” So he was an intelligent competent motor engineer, who travelled all over the region and sometimes the country, repaired heavy goods vehicles and who was very aware of the responsibility he carried. He ensures that he never consumed alcohol until those responsibilities are fully discharged. However, once freed from the responsibility relating to his employment, he was quite happy to consume between 6 and 20 units depending on the strength of his drink, an amount that he believed would bring a normal drinker above the legal limit. He did so in the belief that, as a heavy drinker, the effect of the alcohol on him was less than for a normal person, because he consumed a sandwich. His certainty did not come from knowledge of the considerable and complex literature on alcohol absorption and metabolism nor did he take any account of the alcohol strength of his drinks.

He may also at this point have made, in fact, a distinction about the nature of his drinking. As the interview showed, it was sometimes, perhaps often, the case that after finishing his work, which might have taken place anywhere and with him working alone, Sid could then drive back to somewhere near his home and, if circumstances made it possible, call in to see his workmates and have a drink to end the working day. Although this was an occasion when alcohol was consumed, Sid did not define it as ‘going for a drink’. This was common and indeed defining such drinking occasions as ‘going for a drink’ was resisted because such drinking was undertaken alone, with work colleagues or other people who were not seen as friends with whom he socialised. Drinking in those circumstances was evidently not to be thought of in the same terms as ‘going for a drink’, and his construction of drinking in these terms was the first area where Sid’s firm opposition to drink driving was breaking down.

Sid, along with the majority of the interviewees, ‘goes out for a drink’. Such an outing signified going to the pub or similar place, meeting with some friends, and consuming alcohol as an adjunct to another social activity such as playing pool, darts or other games, taking part in a quiz, or organising some outing or event. These combined activities were known and understood as ‘going for a drink’. It was this drinking that was considered in relation to the medical advice to limit his drinking. For Sid, and also for others, it was for these occasions that rules were drawn up in relation to avoiding driving after drinking. Sid’s careful attitude was seen in that when he went out to the pub for a drink on most evenings his rule and normal procedure was to leave the vehicle behind and walk. Again he exhibited a thoughtful and careful position but during the interview acknowledged that there were “some occasions”, not specified, when he took the pick up and left it behind in the pub car park to be collected next morning. There were also other occasions when he drove to the pub, with the intention of leaving the pick up behind, but would then be too intoxicated to hold to that intention and on these occasions he

drove his vehicle home the short distance from the pub. This then became the second area where Sid's firm position that would ensure no driving after drinking actually gets weakened on some unspecified occasions.

The interview with Sid was conducted after he had completed a rehabilitation course, when his knowledge of the effects of alcohol had increased. This new knowledge revealed his third area of vulnerability for he went on to relate, "Well there's been some times in a morning, if I've been starting at 5 o'clock in a morning, and I might have been drinking while half past eleven at night, I've got in the pick up and I've been thinking, 'I'm not fully aware here'. And then I pick one of the workers up, just round the corner on the estate, I've gone round there and I've said, 'Graham you drive.' 'Cos I know its perhaps 5 and a half hours since me last drink but I knew for a fact that it was still in my system. And I weren't thinking about the police stopping me going to work at that time in a morning, but I were just thinking, 'well, I don't feel as if I am fully aware'." So the very careful responsible motor engineer did, on some occasions start his working day in anything but a sound condition.

At this point Sid showed the location of his understanding of himself as a drinker for it lay with the way he felt and he was not alone in that. As we shall see, so many made a judgement about whether they were safe or not to drive on the basis of the way they felt. As regular consumers of alcohol they believed that they knew themselves and their reactions to the alcohol so well that they were capable, and were the best judges, of whether they were under the legal limit and fit to be driving on the road.

In exploring these matters in relation to Sid, I saw that he had some simple constructions about himself as a drinker, as a conscientious worker who was involved in driving, about alcohol and the effect it had upon him, about drinking as such, about the amounts that it was safe and sensible to drink, and about the length of time alcohol effects his body in particular. I saw that many of these simple constructions were flawed or false because they were based on incorrect or inaccurate information. It was the case with Sid, as for most ordinary human beings, that these various constructions might be considered singly or in combination, generally or at particular times. To some degree they were compartmentalised but might overlap or be generalised so that one relevant construction could be rendered falsified. They depended upon a whole range of ordinary considerations, for they were not thought through, well worked out and developed rationally into a coherent whole. Rather they existed as a compendium of views, opinions, experiences, single pieces of information, beliefs and understandings that came from other people, the media, conversations or senses, and they were milled together to form the particular constructions which, in this case, Sid held. As understandings of the world of drinkers and drivers they were incomplete and thus flawed. Although they served Sid for 14 years as a driver, they did not sustain him as a driver who was not a drink driver. In addition he did not always live within this set of constructions but, when it suited him and on grounds that were particular to him, he set them aside.

Understandings led to constructions in accord with virtual social identity

In the introduction to this chapter reference was made to Goffman's (1963) distinction between virtual and actual social identities the former being based on normative expectations. When reviewing the studies on expectancies mention was made of the links between attitudes, beliefs and behaviour and the significance of

the former two for the latter. If the basis for these were incorrect or inaccurate information, this fundamental lack led to beliefs and attitudes not being accurate. Insofar as their drinking and driving behaviour was based upon those it would lead to unintended behaviour. The links between these subjects' beliefs and attitudes that were central parts of their constructions that led them to act, are now considered under a number of headings:

Ignorance about the legal limit

Many cannot state what the legal limit is. A recent survey (Siegrist and Bachli-Biehy 2000) of Swiss drivers found that only 60% knew the legal limit, 85% overestimated the amount of alcohol needed to bring them to that limit and only 45% considered that most of their acquaintances thought they should stay within the limit. The fact that in the UK, as with most other states, the law, by setting a legal limit, allows drivers to consume some alcohol before driving is a recipe to cause confusion in people's minds. As well as being a matter of public policy it is a personal dilemma for many people. As might be anticipated, some 16 of these subjects mention these uncertainties. Some were not sure that they knew what is the limit in terms of alcohol per milligrams of breath or blood and the vast majority were uncertain as to what that limit translated to in actual drinks. Many who were aware of the terminology also believed that a unit equals one pint, whereas in fact it equals a half pint of a precise and relatively low alcohol concentration by volume. Almost all assumed that all beers, ciders, and lagers are the same in terms of alcohol strength or the amount of alcohol in the drink. This allowed people consistently to refer to their drinks in terms of "pints" as if that was an adequate measure. No one at all, when referring to his past experience mentioned the strength of alcohol in their drink even though, on the course, they had undertaken exercises to ascertain the strength of their usual alcohol drink and had been taught the significance of relating both the quantity consumed and the strength of the alcohol.

Although the desire not to drink and drive was present in the vast majority, the attitude of many was, 'I am allowed to drink so much – so what is that in practice?' 35 year old Clive expressed his uncertainty as "But I wasn't quite aware of that limit." Or as Pat, a 40 years old miner, said, "But I didn't really understand what alcohol did to you. I didn't know how many units was in a pint of bitter." Or as 48 year old work study engineer, Roy, stated it, "If you check one of those [alcohol] questionnaires I was completely ignorant before." Retired Post Office engineer Len agreed. As did Will, an insulation engineer aged 29, who acknowledged that "there's no way that I would have known how much to have to drink. I would probably have said 3 pints – a really wild guess, like". In fact he regularly drank more than that amount, and individuals inevitably came to different judgements as to the amount of alcohol that it was 'safe' to consume and then drive at or below the legal limit. Within the group, who expressed uncertainty about this matter, the concern was not only the amount of alcohol needed to bring them to the legal limit but other considerations such as safety or a level that would not affect driving. The understood amount differed, for example Walt said, "I thought that I can drink up to 5 pints and still get away with it". "I hadn't had more than 4 pints" when he offended said surprised Colin, and both Vince and Harry considered "if I had 4 pints I was safe". Vince based his figure on other people's views, "... and some people say, 'Well if you've only had three or four pints you're alright'." Otto, Leo, Mick, Owen and Tom conceived a lower limit and set it at "2, maybe 2 and a half pints and you'd be alright". Others, such as Ivor and Nigel, had a lower working limit for themselves and others, which Nigel expressed as, "Most people said you could have two and a half to three pints and be alright, so I used to think that I would have two pints and then take the car home." This shows that the belief in what a personal

limit should be varied considerably and was not strong enough to change the attitude to driving with alcohol present.

Even the introduction of the legal limit appears to have increased the amount that some believed able to drink before driving for 42 year old Bill claimed, "We always used to go to the pub at night and have a pint and a half and because of the breathalyser law it sort of sneaked up to 2 pints. And we thought, you know, we were alright at that..."

Also others had less precision in their estimate but a confidence in their attitude, as Andy witnessed to not going out driving a car knowing, "I was going to be drinking a substantial amount of alcohol." Alternatively, Ian felt "a few pints out with the lads... it were nothing." Again Paul was clear that, because he did not know "what the exact limit was", he was precluded from taking it into account in any decision to drive after drinking.

Alcohol affects everyone differently

Again it was a popular belief that as the effect of alcohol was "different for everybody, isn't it" (Mark) so what that translates to in terms of the amount of alcohol that will bring someone to the legal limit must, by implication, also be different for everybody. Hence it was logical for some to examine their own feelings and allow these feelings, based on their beliefs, to be the determining factor. As Neil put it, being "conscious that I'd be towing a 20 foot trailer", his decision to drive was determined by an alcohol level "where I felt I was safe... yes, that's what was controlling me in those days certainly." When interviewed, after completing a course, he knew there "was control but at too high a level – the threshold was too high." Similarly for Owen, whether his drinking was after walking in the Lake District, visiting the seaside or after work, it was quite in order to drink and then to drive for 4 or 5 hours to get home for he felt fine.

Knowing how much alcohol is consumed

Not only was there a relaxed atmosphere in the social events surrounding drinking that readily allowed people to be quite flexible about their self-imposed limit, but there was also difficulty in knowing just how much one has consumed. Thus, in addition to a lack of accurate knowledge of units of alcohol and the strengths of drinks or the process by which alcohol is metabolised by the body, many had only a limited knowledge of the amount of alcohol actually drunk. Few were aware of the alcohol concentration of what they drank, had little idea of what a unit of alcohol consisted and kept no tally of the precise quantity they had consumed. Not many went out to count their consumption in precise units when relaxing over a drink. These matters allowed people to have beliefs and attitudes that did not accord with reality. Thus Keith and others agreed with Chris who, with his new knowledge, recognised, "I may have driven when I was over the limit in the last couple of years and been unaware of it." Because of the above uncertainties of precise measurement, as well as knowing just how much to consume and what is a personal safe limit, it was not surprising that the measure many used was how they felt within themselves.

Getting rid of the alcohol

Having attended a course, seven of these men recognised that they had probably been guilty of drink driving on the morning after their drinking. As Vince said, "I

didn't know but I would still have been over the limit from the night before". Ivor, Sam and Dan all carefully avoided driving after drinking in an evening but now believed that they may well have been vulnerable next morning. For Eric and Neil, when abroad, it would be because they were driving early in the morning. As well as his poor understanding of the length of time to discharge alcohol, the civil engineer Neil could drive, in apparently complete safety in isolated places abroad, "for an hour and not see anyone, trees were more of a problem than cars". His previous evening's drinking had no effect on his decision to drive. The young Alex recognised that the effect of his Saturday night's drinking was still with him when he drove to see his father on Sunday morning. Prior to coming on a course, he did not believe that he "could" almost certainly be over the legal limit. Others recognised that they, too, had not been conscious of the fact they might be over the limit the next morning after heavily drinking the previous evening. It was a similar position for Sid, who confirmed the same new understanding. Once again the essential element was the lack of clear information about the length of time taken to metabolise the alcohol they had consumed. The common belief of these subjects being that once they had slept and woke refreshed, alcohol no longer played any part within them. Very few of these men had any idea about the metabolism of alcohol (see Moskowitz et al 2000, Plant and Cameron 2000). Of the few who had, many believed that they would metabolise a pint in the time it normally takes to process 1 unit of alcohol. This is in excess of the accepted rate, for a pint can be from 2 to 5 units depending on the drink's alcohol strength.

Alcohol helps me understand myself

Some of these heavier drinkers, whose norm assumed their level of drinking to be common (Schechtman et al 1999), significantly failed to understand one result of alcohol for they did not seem to be aware that, as one primary effect, alcohol distorts our understandings of our capabilities and ourselves. Dave highlighted this distortion as he described his thought processes whereby "I used to go out and have a couple of beers at teatime or whatever. I have 3 or 4 pints, I think, 'Right we're OK. No problem', you have 6 or 7 and you think, 'I ought to get a taxi' you know or 'leave the car, I'll walk back down for it in the morning'. You get above that and you think, 'Sod it, I'll be alright, it's only 2 miles'. And you'd be surprised how many people go and think along the same lines." Thus was his attitude formed from a perceived norm. As a result of the new knowledge gained on the course there were some who recognised that, when they have been drinking, there had been occasional, frequent or even regular occasions when they were over the legal limit because their only defining point was themselves.

The sort of drinker I am makes a difference

For others, their limited understanding meant that there were beliefs, in other than the alcohol they had consumed, that they felt it right to take into consideration. Ian was "young and fit" so any alcohol would have less effect on him. Colin, lead singer with a number of groups, thought "you'd use it off in energy ... you exert a lot of energy when you are up there singing and dancing about." Owen's four or five pints, "didn't bother" him on any occasion whether he had the car or not. Paul was "inured if that's the word. Not inured, unaffected" by his regular heavy drinking, so that left him free to drive after drinking. Sid's regular sandwich with his drink meant 3 or 4 pints were safe for him. Ben, a regular party goer, believed that, "there is different levels, I mean it's a fact, and although I've learned better now, I've known that ... I've had too much to drink, but still got in the car." The way of thinking for Walt was more complex, for he acknowledged his attitude that "when I've been in

the car and gone to the pub I have never not drunk". The amount he consumed would be linked to his mood and feeling for "If I'm in a relaxed and everything I'll drink a lot more but if I'm mad or something I'll drink about the same". When he had been into Derbyshire for a relaxed drink, because he could now count his consumption, he recognised that 6 pints was his personal norm.

Alcohol improves driving performance

A major imprudence, stemming from a lack of understanding about alcohol's effects, was the belief registered by the DJ, Harry, that "a lot of mates of mine who drink and drive now and some admit to it – but you all think that deep ... you all think ... you seem to think you're a better driver when you've had a pint." This was clearly his view prior to his offence. Guy, as a professional HGV driver, had a more careful attitude as had Walt, who considered he would be under the limit after his drinking, but also made sure that "I'm driving alright". Similar attitudes were held by Keith who would be "really thinking about being safe" in his driving. Likewise Eric drove carefully after consuming alcohol, "and I err, sort of, I drove sensibly when I had a drink." This meant driving "at 30 miles a hour, got my seat belt on, which I never normally do, I normally don't wear my seat belt, always when I had a drink I used to wear it." Harry considered himself a "careful driver" and "when I've had a pint I've always been aware – thinking 'Don't go fast, slow down' and it's been like ... that..." Again Ben, recognised that he had frequently made the deliberate choice to drive when over the limit, for he "was the one, Peter, that always drove. Because... 'I'm alright driving, no problem, I'm not going to have an accident'". His belief was sure and shared by Joe who "had no accidents" except the one at his offence. Others such as Ed took care and tried to "foresee other people and what they're going to do", Frank as a trained police driver felt he could "drive without danger", Owen felt he was not drinking enough to cause any problems and Neil was concerned that he "was safe". Four had been involved in accidents: Jack and Sam when young and over the limit; the only time Fred, apart from his offence, believed he had been drink driving was when he had an accident; Alex could not understand "how I'd come off that road" when he offended for he was normally careful and safe. For these drivers the reality was not the abstract limit enshrined in law but the much more relevant reality of whether they would have an accident or not; and as many never had an accident, their belief in their own ability to reach home safely was sustained by their experience.

To these practices, which were based upon false or limited understandings of alcohol, a lack of attention, even complacency, must be added. As Chris informed me, if he "felt competent", he just became careless" and assumed that he was under the limit and safe.

Being "unfit to drive" was not understood and is questioned

This lack of attention, with the majority of older drivers, appeared to stem from consistent beliefs, attitudes and personal constructions of themselves as drivers especially drinking drivers, in which it was safe to continue to behave in the way they had always done. This was seen in that their conviction as a drinking driver seems not to have just surprised but shattered their construction of themselves as safe drivers (see Sykes and Matza 1957). One way to explore this aspect was to examine how such personal constructs were developed. Amongst the group of older drivers, there was a cluster of common attitudes that seemed to arise from experiences prior to the introduction of the breath test in the UK in 1967. Some stemmed from direct experience, their own or of family members, as with Eric, a 48

year old, who recounted that, "it wasn't thought of then as it is now, was it? I remember my father getting - being brought down here to the police station. He'd been involved in an accident and he walked a line and they threw down 8 half crowns on the floor and he picked them up and they sent him home." Even for those whose driving experience had been entirely post 1967 the 'old' understanding continued. Ben expressed it as, "I'd have been 15 then, so the breathalyser was definitely on the go when I was 17. I might be wrong but I just seem to think that it wasn't that important in those days. I mean you got stopped if you were doing something wrong, not because you'd got... They wouldn't breathalyse if you'd got a faulty number plate like, whereas they would today." Similarly Vic, a garage proprietor, amplified the point making the observation that, prior to 1967, "there were no test. They couldn't tell if you'd had 2 pints or 22 pints, they wouldn't know." For many of these older drivers, driving with alcohol in the body was not considered or thought about as they entered the car to drive. A professional sub-culture may have supported this, as financial consultant Gary expressed it, "I was like most people in my profession and they always got away with drinking and driving. Never gave it a thought, which is typical of what were going off maybe 12 years ago, isn't it?" Because driving is behaviour without precise measured standards and is largely undertaken on one's own, it is inevitable that social norms develop and it is against such perceived norms that drivers judge their competencies and safety. So these older drivers all imagined that most other drivers shared their attitude and value, and they claimed that they were not unique within their social circle, in 'never-giving-it-a-thought'. Indeed, in the abstract, they often abhorred dangerous drink driving, for Brian commented that he understood the demands of drink drivers victim's families and shared their views.

Somewhat atypical of younger men was the attitude of Dave, in his 30's, who, when asked when he became conscious of drink driving, replied "Oh, [chuckle] when I got pulled". Whilst facetiously expressed, he intended me to understand that it was something he did not consider at all prior to his conviction.

My Dad told me about it

Many of all ages recognised that parental attitude had been a powerful influence for them. This was not always in a consistent manner or in the direction the parents wanted. For some, such as Eric and the much younger Dick, it was their father's drink driving and getting away with it that was a strong influence for them to do the same. As Dick expressed his attitude, "the whole business never registered" with him. Alternatively one young man, Giles, grew up in an environment and culture that he perceived as strongly opposed to drink driving; "There's never been a real rigid enforcement, I've never had someone saying to me, 'It's the most evil thing you can do'. It's just been a very clear-cut case of - 'If you're going out don't do it.'" Against this has to be placed the experience of some of his current student friends who spoke of their parents who, "regularly go to the pub and have 4 or 5 pints and then drive home." These were different bases on which to develop an attitude. Alternatively others, such as Leo, Vince, Will and Huw, all spoke in remarkably similar terms that their parents "drummed it into me", or more particularly of Dad who used to "drum it into me", not to drink and drive. For the young Vince it was an almost paranoid parental reaction to his going out in the car, as he explained, "I'd be going round to pick the bird up and he'd be whittling, 'You're not going round to the pub - make sure you're not going to the pub'" and then telephoning Vince's girlfriend's house at regular intervals throughout the evening to "make sure I weren't doing it." Thus parental influence operated in different ways. The child either adopted the parent's ways without further consideration or reacted against views that they considered had been too strongly expressed. Nor does there seem to

have been much clarity in what the parents were actually advising their children, for some it was undoubtedly not to drive with any alcohol in the body, for others a more relaxed view of not to drive with too much alcohol inside.

My experience proves me right

For other of these subjects, their early experiences reinforced their attitude of lack of concern about the matter because, as with Neil, whose early driving was in isolated areas abroad undertaking civil engineering projects, or Sam, whose early driving was on a large private estate in Scotland. The sense of having a belief that driving after drinking was something that should not be done (See Sykes and Matza 1957), but of the awareness being so vague that it did not impinge upon actual behaviour, was common to many. Joe recognised that, although “there have been many times on television” when the ‘don’t drink and drive’ message has been seen and so he “knew it was wrong to drink and drive. But somehow ...”, it was without a true understanding, and he could believe that his attitudes were correct and thus proper behaviour would follow.

For those who did get stopped by the police and undertook a breath test, the experience may well have re-enforced their existing drinking and driving practice. If you were stopped and found to be under the legal limit they thought, as did Dick, “Don’t worry about it. I’m all right. I’m all right. There were nothing to worry about.” Even any learning from a previous conviction and disqualification may be counteracted by further breath tests, as Otto witnessed. “But myself since I got banned the first time and after that I’ve been pulled by the police many times. Once I left here and I was in the next-door pub and I had 3 and a half pints of Guinness on an empty stomach and I left here and they just followed. I don’t know what they’ve got against me or something, but a mile from here near my house, I was negative on 3 and a half pints. So I always thought that 3 pints was nothing...” And Walt’s unfettered attitude was confirmed when, on one occasion, he was stopped by the police, at the pub before he could drive off, breathalysed and as it only registered orange he was cleared to proceed, “but I’d drunk like 8 pints, [and] I’d had a couple of shorts”. The probability is, of course, that he still had a rising BAC and had he been tested again at say one hour intervals a different picture would have emerged. (Moskowitz et al 2000)

It isn’t something I do

The attitude of some older men, as we have seen, was not to give the possibility of their drink driving much attention because of their constructions. They were not alone in that situation. Including them, some 14 out of 44 claimed that they were not consciously taking decisions regarding the conjunction of consuming alcohol and driving. For example, Chris, was only an occasional drinker but when he did go out with his girl friend, later his wife, to be together they drove out of the city to a small village pub, where it was quiet, warm and cosy. He did not construe this as going drinking (see chapter 5) and no thought of the inconsistency in his practice. For others this was because they had a clear construction of what drink driving meant and a practice, however incomplete, that the car was left at home when they went drinking. So, as Sam expressed it, “I wasn’t drinking and driving, as far as I’m concerned. I wasn’t drinking and driving because I wasn’t taking the car to the pub. I left it and walked, but getting up next morning – that never crossed my mind.” (Sykes and Matza 1957)

Alongside these newly found explanations for their non-regard of drinking and driving were those who simply expressed their attitude as, "It never really entered my mind" (Sid) or "I never gave it a thought" (Ed) or "I never gave it a second thought" (Keith). Perhaps Eric summed up this aspect with his plea, "I never thought I was doing anything wrong by drinking and driving... It was just natural...". Again some such as Vic, recognised that they took the car and went for a drink and did not think about it, even though the drinking level would normally be well in excess of the legal limit.

Quite distinct were some drivers in their early 20's who had been reared in and accepted the attitudes and values of a culture that was opposed to drinking drivers. This was expressed by Andy as "... I'm not trying to sort of blow my own trumpet but the younger generations own trumpet, is that to young people at the moment and for people say 18 to 25, and even up to 30, you know the car is such an important part of your life... because of the freedom that it gives you that it's not worth your losing your licence. Its especially so if you've got your own car, as many young people have, um and I think that if, in a way, ... the younger generation is a lot more aware and lot more conscious of drink driving..." This was confirmed by Jack, in less idealistic terms and against a less certain practice, "I've always known it's a sort of no-no. Not because it's the law. I've always known that drink and driving is sort of bad, you know." Observing people drinking 5 pints and claiming to be fine was seen for what it was; "I know you're not perfectly fine once you've had that but I still ended up doing that. Not at first, I was a bit strict with myself, thinking that's ... Well, actually I didn't go out in the car if I knew I was going to drink. But that was probably because I was driving my parent's car, you see. Whereas when I had my own car it was like we had a few drinks at a friend's house and 'shall we go down town or shall we go down, you know, E-- Road or somewhere like that and start drinking?' and people said 'Yeah, yeah'."

The development of some people's constructions came from sources other than parents. What began as excellent, safe practice did not necessarily continue for long. Some learned, when out socialising, not to consume any alcohol at all if they had taken a vehicle. Vic believed that this was the case for him when he was in the forces, though he was not expressly forbidden, "You said you were on duty. That was it, so you didn't drink and drive in the forces." But this early attitude had carried forward into his life after National Service and so had not prevented him from being a regular driver after consuming amounts that would bring him over the legal limit. Similarly the young Andy, firmly anti drink driving, told how he drove his mates into town and abstained from drinking, for "You know, it didn't interest me". As the interview proceeded he recognised that this had been for a limited time. It was "certainly for the first two years, maybe even three years" but then slowly changed to consuming some alcohol. He needed to be most meticulous about his abstention because "if somebody had three or four pints and then be ready to drive ... you know ... sometimes, if I said, 'You mustn't get in the car with them' it was, 'Oh, see you later' and that was it." Of longer duration was the practice of Huw, who, "... if I ever did have the car, people used to ask me to have a drink I didn't used to do it. I used to tell them, 'No, because its work. It will affect my work.' They used to understand." The 'understanding' of companions spoken of by Huw seemed, in one sense, to be general. No one spoke of being put under direct pressure to drink by friends or associates. On the other hand there were those who clearly felt under some pressure to conform to the perceived or expected norm, even though that norm may never have been expressed by anyone. For Ian and others this occurred during the socialising after playing soccer or rugby football. Others experienced a similar felt pressure to conform when work ceased early on a Friday afternoon and

'everyone' repaired to the nearest pub to drink together to mark the end of the working week and celebrate the coming weekend - before driving home.

My drinking is like this

In addition to their personal belief, based on no sound evidence, in the amount of alcohol they could consume before reaching the legal limit to drive, these subjects also showed a social construction about drinking occasions. We have already seen, with Sid's case study, that stopping for a drink on the way home after work was not considered in the same way as 'going out for a drink'. In this way, actual behaviour did not match their notions of not driving after drinking. Others (Eric, Own, Paul, Ray, Clive, Roy, Vic, Alan) indicated a similar pattern as "... finishing work at night, going for a couple of pints after work and then driving home didn't bother me." For Ian this was his only drinking as, "Once I'm in the house that's it. I don't go back out." Whilst Will did stop on the way home for "a couple of pints, and something to eat and carry on, like. But it were very rare. It weren't a common thing to do." But there were others for whom taking alcohol when they had not gone for a drink was frequent and whose actual drinking on some occasions was well in excess of what was considered a small safe amount. For example Colin never went out for drinking sessions but when singing with his music groups "I could easily drink 4 or 5".

These heavy drinking occasions included special events such as a wedding (Harry), a good days walk in the Peak District (Owen), going to the Bowling Club (Sid), or drinking at the end of "your social things" such as walking, sailing, climbing (Neil), but for some most of their drinking occasions. "If there were a party or a special occasion then we'd get a bus or taxi", stated Paul, adding "But that was the exception more than the norm."

In the manifold situations and circumstances through which people lived, they came to different amounts of alcohol that they believed it was 'safe' to consume on that occasion and in that circumstance and some had little idea of the reality. Even when the practical understanding of the safe amount to consume was, for many, in doubt the self-imposed limit that was acceptable to individuals also changed from occasion to occasion and sometimes on every occasion. Roy did not take the car when he went out drinking but if he happened to have the car with him when working or attending a sporting occasion he did not worry about having a couple of pints. Similarly, the construction of Vic did not encompass weekend trips out into the Derbyshire countryside and calling at "different pubs... as you did." Tom confirmed that he was aware of a limit but recognised that, "... I thought another one and it'll not bother, kind of thing." Vince recognised that he was untroubled when stopped by the police for, "I think I'd only had something like three pints." There were those, as above, who, while their drinking was not always kept to a self-imposed limit, were all drinking relatively small amount of up to 3 pints.

Summary

In general, the men were not only aware of the possibility and practice of drink driving but were generally opposed to it and had no desire to fall foul of the law (see Sykes and Matza 1957). Yet alongside their attitudes, desires or even formulated ways of trying not to drive after drinking has to be set their constructions about themselves and their situations. Such constructions were developed from the knowledge and understandings people gave them; from their perceptions and feelings; and from idealised expectations of what they hoped would happen. If these were, by their very nature, deeply flawed then people lived in some falsely

constructed world whose relation to the real world was faulty. Thus I recognised that, for the majority, many never actually considered the matter of driving with alcohol in them at all because they considered their norm of not taking the car when they went out drinking, or only being an occasional drinker, or having some physical characteristic or drinking practice or their being ignorant of the amount of alcohol actually consumed or the amount that would bring them to the legal limit left them with little or no need to consider the matter. Others, without the necessary knowledge to construct an accurate understanding of themselves as potential drink drivers, used the only construction available to them - they "felt all right" and carried on putting themselves at risk of prosecution secure on that shifting sand.

Others, rather more prosaically, considered that it would never happen to them because they felt that police procedures were very relaxed or even inoperative. Or because after a drink they drove carefully or at times when they would not be noticed by the police. Some had early driving experiences that led them to consider they were never vulnerable.

8 THE RULES DEVELOPED IN ORDER NOT TO DRINK AND DRIVE

Introduction: personal rules

The evidence of these drivers summarised in a single sentence might state that whilst driving with alcohol in the body was not the highest priority in people's minds there was, for the majority, some thought-through idea as to how to avoid offending or at least conviction of the offence (see Sykes and Matza 1957). The extent of the thinking through process and what the 'thought through idea' amounted to depended on individuals. This poses the question as to what the outcome of such a process is properly called. I have chosen to call these outcomes 'rules', or on occasions for clarity 'personal rules', following JD Douglas (1971).

"Action was accounted for by the pattern of attitudes, conditioned responses and needs of individuals and the sanctioned expectations (roles) to which a person was subject, so action becomes a matter of role conflict, conformity, deviance and sanctioning or reinforcing processes. Common to both the expectation (an imperative supported by sanctions) upon and the dispositions of the actors (tendency) was the idea of a stable linkage between the situation of the actor and his action in the situation. This linkage was called a rule, so that a disposition was a rule that has been learned and an expectation was a rule that has been institutionalised."

Perhaps this was summarised in his statement "Interaction was essentially rule governed." (Douglas JD 1971)

It was seen, in chapter 5 that there was no one consistent drinking pattern for people, in chapter 6 that driving was not always considered as such, and in chapter 7 that the beliefs and attitudes on which constructions about drinking and drink driving were based were not informed by scientific evidence. Thus it was not possible for any individual to assume that a single standard rule would suffice throughout his driving career and ensure that a drink driving offence would not occur. The next chapter will show that over half of these men had offended more than once and thus, almost of necessity, had different rules at certain times. Yet some had only one rule. If this were the case, there would be occasions when the possibility of drink driving was unconsidered, because of a belief that the rule was operative when in fact it was not. At other times they had a clear understanding of how they were avoiding conviction. It was also inevitable that many of the rules developed by this group were based upon inaccurate constructions and were therefore not rules that would avoid offending at all. Others were partial, applying only to some segment of the total vulnerability of a particular individual. Nor can it be assumed that the rule, or lack of it, was a permanent position.

1. Sometimes rules are not developed:

I don't need a rule

Some members had, at some time in their driving career, no rule that could be categorised as such. Tony recalled it as an almost deliberate choice, "I was young. I was probably dafter than I am now. I was a lot dafter than I am now. Err.. drink driving was not frowned up and not in the public eye as it was now... and I would go out with my friends and somebody would drive and somebody would take the risk I

suppose.” Having been convicted once “complacency set back in” for Paul and he believed, “I’ve had my fickle finger of fate’s pointed at me once. It can’t happen again ... and you get in that state of mind that it won’t happen once you’ve been banned once that, that’s your ... so you know ... you’re OK, you’ve had your go, it’s somebody else’s turn.” Dick active with his various hobbies in an evening would, at the end of the evening, “pop up to the club for 2 or 3 pints and drive up and drive back” without a thought. Others such as Keith doubted if they would get caught because, as Paul articulated his previous belief, “it’ll not happen to me, you know”.

In these circumstances I don’t need to think about it

The nature of the circumstances also affected the consideration people gave to their driving after drinking. As an example, Neil, who had recently been declared redundant, a helpful relationship had ended and who was receiving medication for depression, entertained his best and oldest friend for the weekend. Having seen his friend off home on a beautiful summer Monday morning and undertaken some chores, he returned home and began to do some gardening. It was thirsty work and he drank a glass of Pernod, left from the weekend, and then more. Eventually, in order to facilitate his neighbour’s parking; he moved his car, remained sitting in it, off the road, listening to music and fell asleep. This was his situation when the police found him, though he had no recollection of their arrival at all. Walt had been drinking heavily but, after a serious altercation with his girlfriend, also drunk, she walked away from him to go home. He was so concerned about her that he followed, driving a few yards behind her. His only consideration was her safety (see Sykes and Matza 1957). An incident in which Ian drove his car to safety when the police refused to assist him is reported fully later. All these are circumstances in which individuals did not think about any rule they might otherwise have applied.

Adams (1995) argued that some respond to risky situations by retaining an element of risk. This may be said to be the case with Vic who considered the risk of being caught for drink driving for two or three years after the breathalyser was introduced but then thought that if one considered the increasing number of cars on the road the chance of his being stopped were very low odds of at least “1000 to 1”. He decided to continue to drive the short distance to his pub and for 25 years he drove to and from his public house without the police stopping him. He argued, “And then ... how many people would be on the road at this time? Four, five thousand, six thousand in relation to how many police cars on the road? They can’t stop all six thousand. So it cuts your odds down to about 60, 70 to 1. Probably even more than that, 1000 to 1 for getting stopped. So then you can flout the law, then you start to ... and I did it for twenty five years. 1970, thirty, 1997. Yes, I did it for twenty five years. Never got stopped.”

I’m in too much of a mess to think about it

Again men failed to have or to abide by their rule at times when they were emotionally disturbed. In Chapter 5 when exploring drinking style I recognised that the final element related to conditions that changed a particular style. The most frequent circumstance for these men was the emotional turmoil that accompanied the ending of relationships or deaths. The generality re-assumed a previous drinking pattern with increased frequency of drinking and drinking larger quantities. Dave was amicably divorced from his wife but his business finances were in a difficult state and he thought he had an agreement with his ex-wife to provide the mortgage and insurance for her new home and this would settle a debt that he owed her. Not intending to go anywhere, he had a number of drinks then, on the

telephone his ex-wife told him she had made other financial arrangements. The call ended in a "blazing row" so that later in the evening, in the pub, he thought of his new girlfriend, "I want to see her. So I came home, walked home, got in the car and drove up to the F-- ... picked her up and drove home." His usual rule abandoned in his emotional extremity. Likewise Frank, when his wife refused him permission to take the children, as had been planned, on his Saturday off drowned his sorrow in the pub all day. Colleagues and friends came and went but he remained drinking, waiting for his new girlfriend to end her work. When she was free an argument arose and, too drunk to care, he set off to drive. The ending of an eighteen year long relationship so distressed Otto that, for weeks, he drank every night and more than his usual two pints. He was too upset to be conscious of his regular thinking that, "I need the car, my licence to go here and there" in connection with his business, so his rule was not considered.

Even for these, without an appropriate rule at the time, there was little suggestion that this has been a deliberate choice over the length of their driving career but a particular set of conditions that led to the matter of drinking and driving remaining unconsidered (see Sykes and Matza 1957).

2. Rules are unsafe because they are not constructed on a sound basis⁸

Because the constructions about events are inaccurate

The simplest basis of all on which to construct a method for avoiding a drink-drive conviction was to assume that the course of the driving action was clear and nothing unforeseen could or would happen. Harry often went to the pub, "a mile and a half" away for a drink and recognised to me that "I used to get a car regular" because "you think, well, I'll have two pints and like ... I'm alright". Ian would "usually call on the way home" drink two or three pints and then drive the "two or three hundred yards" home that was "easy to walk" - so the matter needed no further consideration. Similarly Len's rule failed to span a changed set of circumstances. He had temporarily taken charge of a club, to which he belonged. This involved him in tasting and testing drinks, being at the club bar for longer than was his norm and using the car to go to the club on more occasions each day as "I only live round the corner, well it's just over half a mile." His perception of what he was doing did not change although his drinking, the length of time he spent at the club and driving the small distance home all changed. Huw, who drove for his job and thought about it in that connection and was most assiduous when at work, assumed the construction "I'll never do it especially because it's my job" covered the situation of calling for a drink on his way home from work. Again Walt who had been breathalysed once, outside the pub, when he had taken 8 pints and the meter moved only into the orange band so "after that I thought I can drink up to 5 pints and still get away with it".

A further area of false constructions related to those people whose perception of themselves, as drinkers, did not accord with different drinking on particular occasions. Pat was quite capable of consuming a large quantity of alcohol but

⁸ An earlier version of this section was published as HUTCHINSON P (2000) 'ME officer?' Perceptions of the links between alcohol and driving by convicted drink-drivers. *Stockholm: Proceedings of the 15th International Conference on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety, ICADTS, 2000*

often, conscious that he had to be at work by 0530 the next morning, he restricted his drinking to a small amount. Indeed frequently he chose not to go out at all - so his perception of himself, coincided with his perceived norm of modest drinking, was that he had settled down and was only a 'modest drinker'. However, if he did go visiting or conducting some private business, and drove his car, he assumed that, as a modest drinker, he would be safe. Neither did the fact that he was convicted three times make a great impact because on the first occasion he was stopped for a missing light, the second for a headlight out and the third was a spot check. He was still convinced that as a modest drinker it was, as it were, bad luck and had more to do with police concern about his vehicle than about his driving after drinking (see Sykes and Matza 1957). Likewise, Colin's awareness of the amounts he drank was deficient and the perceived norm, which he believed applied was not accurate. He was well inebriated at his first conviction when he met the police as he drove the wrong way on an unfamiliar one-way street and laughingly refused to return, as the police requested of him. But "I never used to drink a tremendous amount. I mean ... some people call a tremendous amount 4 pints, 3 pints, some call it twelve pints. You could say that 4 pints'ish was a lot for me in those days." Nine years later he was again convicted after playing a gig in a public house some way from home and again drinking "about 4 pints, 4 pints again, which I feel comfortable with" he thought, "I'll just drive home, I won't get pulled up". His confidence was misplaced and he soon felt sick, pulled into the roadside and lay down in a field because "you can't drive like this, you've had too much to drink - what do you think you're playing at?"

Rather differently Gary had a party at home and, without thinking, offered to take home some of their guests as they did not have a car. Similarly unaware of his consumption Alan moved his car, whilst at a wedding, a short distance to a safer position. At another wedding, at which Ray was best man, he celebrated to the extent that "I don't even remember taking the decision to actually drive."

Thus any rules constructed without an accurate understanding about how much one had drunk along with perceived norms about what constituted modest drinking or intoxication led some to be wide open to conviction.

Because I feel alright

Others chose to drive knowing that they had been drinking, even a lot, but "thought I'd be alright". If this has been supported with the evidence of clear breath tests as for Walt and Jack, there was no reason not to "go out and drink cans of lager in the car and sit there and just talk with people" even when "you drink Special Brew, the sort of 9% sort of lagers". Vic, having been banned once, and not wanting to get caught again, had no idea what the legal limit translated to in drinks. He hadn't "a clue. I've been promising myself to get one of those do-it-yourself breathalyser kits" so that he could test whether his "four pints after you've had a meal and four pints without a meal and see what the difference in the readings are." Without this evidence he stayed with his own feelings. Even when friends suggested to Otto that he had drunk too much to safely drive, he "felt alright, but you know when you've had alcohol you feel alright but, I don't know, you're not. You might think, "I'm all right" you know and your vision and you know like - I know now but when I got done ... I knew I was OK." As Ed said, "I'd have two pints and at the most two and a half and stupid me, thought, "Well, that's alright."

In essence, for these, the self assessments they made based on their feelings were not an accurate guide as to what the legal limit translates to in drinks. Their actions were based on unsound beliefs.

Because I drive safely

Alternatively, in relation to driving, the basis on which a rule was constructed may have been based on an incomplete, even false, premise as shown by Keith who told me "I was really thinking about being safe than thinking about the limit, in those days. In those days I didn't think I would ever get pulled by the police." For others the controlling factor, as for Eric, has been that he drove sensibly after having a drink, "I didn't get in the car and drive at twice the speed – I'd drive it at half the speed." It was also the case for Guy whose route home from the pub was carefully chosen to avoid the possibility of an accident or getting stopped by the police. After being convicted twice, Ian supposed "it made me more wary and more ... cunning! You know instead of coming the normal way home you'd be coming the back streets."

In addition to that sense of wariness and confidence in their own abilities as drivers must be added the conviction that having an accident and even getting stopped by the police would not happen.

Because I really don't know about alcohol

The lack of accurate knowledge in relation to the basic facts about alcohol of these men has already been discussed so it was not surprising that some personal constructions about alcohol were false. These misunderstandings naturally impacted upon the rules people developed to be safe and avoid detection. To consider oneself a better driver after "you've had a pint" (Harry) was a clear preparation for an unsafe rule. If you are unaware of how little it was safe to drink before driving then again one could construct an unsafe rule as did Ian who thought that being young and fit would nullify the effects of alcohol or Nigel who was "defeated" in knowing how much he could consume before reaching the legal limit. Again if you had no idea how long the metabolisation process takes it would be possible to assume, as did Paul and Owen, that the lunchtime two pints would be cleared by 5 p.m. when work ended. As Owen said, "this was what's done me more than owt." Alan "wasn't really aware of the different strengths" of his alcoholic drink and that this made a difference so his rule did not encompass making a calculation to allow for that.

3. Sensible rules are constructed:

It is important to recognise the sense in which the word 'sensible' is used in this heading. It has no absolute quality but is intended to be considered as within the constructions the men were using. Hence many would argue that drivers are allowed some alcohol in their body by the law so the first rule of limiting the amount of alcohol was in those terms 'sensible'. They were taught on the DDR course that in view of the individual differences and complexities of alcohol absorption and metabolisation, the time taken to consume the alcohol, and the inability to predict when they might be tested by the police the only 'sensible' rule is not to drive with any alcohol present. This is the rule adopted by all who facilitated courses.

Limit the amount of alcohol consumed

Perhaps this was the simplest rule adopted by the majority. Brian only drank 1 pint of cider when he had the car with him. Bill had a limit of 1.5 pints though this did increase to 2 pints with time. Harry considered he was alright to drive with 2 pints but not more as did Nigel, Roy and Tony. Tom was prepared to extend that limit to

2.5 pints as was Ed. 2.5 pints was also the limit for Mark. That could be extended to 3 pints for Owen and Dick.

For some this limiting was particularly associated with times they considered themselves to be vulnerable. This was particularly so for those involved in sports especially team games. So Roy would not drink after a table tennis match, Ray after rugby matches, and Bill would drive home after sailing, before going for a drink.

Space out the drinking over time

If one drank more than the self-imposed limit indicated in the previous paragraph one way to remain secure was to space out the drinking over a longer period of time. So, Keith would drink 3 to 4 pints if it were over a 3 or 4 hour period as would Sid. Later Harry's limit rose to 4 pints but this was always spaced over a long period and he was careful never to get drunk or incapable. Others undertook their drinking at the workplace as this was a public house, or a holiday camp (Brian, Len) and only small quantities would be drunk at any one time. How much it would total over a working session was almost certainly unknown.

Do not take the car when I go drinking

The separation of drinking from driving was the other preferred option of over half at some point in their driving careers. As a company representative Dave would not drink alcohol until he had finished his driving for that day and was safely lodged in a hotel for the night. Dave with Leo, Nigel, Vince, Will, Alex, Clive, Fred, Ivor, Keith, Roy, Tom, Bill, Sam and Gary describe their rule as 'never' taking the car when they 'go out drinking'. Sid, Huw, Mark, Pat, Tony, Alan and Dan considered it their regular practice but for whom it was not an absolute. It was easy on particular occasions to take the car for many different reasons. For Sid it was 'on occasions' or 'the odd exception' (Huw) or 'very rare' (Mark) or 'very, very seldom' (Pat) for the rule to be broken, but broken it was. Ivor described how only occasional or special events would alter the rule. As Andy expressed it "I have never gone out in a car knowing that I was going to be drinking". It was common for the car to be left behind when 'going for a drink' but to stop and have a drink when out in the car when 'one just has a drink'

Others make the separation in that their drinking was limited to weekends and it was then that they parked the car and do not use it as with Alex, Dick and Fred. Mick would leave his van at work at the weekends to avoid the conjunction of the two. In the case of Alex, a young man with a very clear idea that at "weekends park up. As soon as Friday, when I finish work, it were parked up and I don't touch it until Monday, going back to work." Yet this so clear understanding does not encompass the fact that he did drive on Sunday morning to see his father and "could still be over." A further variation on this theme for some, who separated their drinking from their work, was to be meticulous about not drinking at work, when they are driving. This applied to HGV drivers Guy, Sid and Dan. It also applied to Otto in the five years he was a bus driver.

Others made this rule when going to parties or nights out. On these occasions they would take a taxi as did Paul, Dick and Will. For others the option was to have a nominated driver if a party of them went out together as did Giles and Tony. A similar notion applies for some who refuse to drink during the day such as Ben.

There were others, such as Ray, Tom, Bill, Sam, Jack, who went out drinking with the clear intention of leaving the car behind and getting home by alternative means. As with other practices, intended to keep the person safe from driving after drinking, there were many possibilities of the perceived norm not being maintained. Feeling that the car was, after all, not going to be safe if left in the public car park made some change their mind and drive home after all (see Sykes and Matza 1957). Only rarely did people change their minds because of conditions such as the weather though convenience at having the vehicle at home next morning was a consideration that weighed with some.

The incongruity of avoiding taking the car, in order not to drive after drinking, and yet to be a passenger with friends who were drinking and then driving, seemed not to have registered with 23 year old Leo. He fancied a drink much less regularly than his friends, but when he did he would go to his friends and "see if they were going for a drink or bite like ... or me other mates they come across for me. They used to drink and drive and take their cars. But I didn't want to..."

Drive so as not to draw the attention of the police

Many considered this to be a second line of defence as it were. The primary rule was to limit their drinking or not to take the car but if, like Dave, you found yourself drinking, and the car was present, then you ensured that the police were not given any reason to stop you. This may be by careful driving and not taking any risks, as with Harry, and especially if towing a trailer, as with Neil, Bill and Walt, or by driving home on minor 'back' roads, unfrequented by the police, as did Guy, or like Eric, you did your drinking in the early evening and went home about 8 o'clock or as with Vic particularly avoiding the change of a police shift. For Ben it also involved having a good car that was kept in a good condition or as Dave thought when "I got a company car, which was brand new, you thought, "Well no one's going to stop me tonight."

Let others do the driving

Some, usually younger people, used a nominated driver system (see Sykes and Matza 1957), but they, as Giles made clear, "would have one pint of very ... at the start of the night and wouldn't drink the rest of the evening." The usual nominated driver was the female partner as for Tony where she "was a definite abstainer with regards to drink" though "may if pushed have a glass of wine or two." Len had two marriages and both wives were drivers and would say, "OK so I'll drive. You're getting a bit on the limit there" though actually he would probably have been well over the limit. His reliance on these ladies was only as secure as their understanding of the amount he had drunk and the link between this and the legal limit.

4. Rules are modified in actual practice:

Personal rules, however sound they are, may not be strictly adhered to for many reasons. Some of those for these drivers were:

The amount of alcohol needed to exceed the limit was not clear

Individuals came to different judgements as to the amount of alcohol that it was 'safe' to consume and then be able to drive at or below the legal limit, because they

had little idea of the true position. In the manifold situations and circumstances in which they found themselves, on that occasion and in the circumstances that then applied each one had to find the correct alcohol level. Many were unable to do that for, as Clive expressed it, "It was a grey area to me, you know." Others, such as Ivor and Nigel, had a working limit for themselves and others, which he expressed as, "Most people said you could have two and a half to three pints and be alright, so I used to think that I would have two pints and then take the car home." Bill claimed that his working limit of 1.5 pints increased to 2 pints as a result of the introduction of breath tests. This amount seems to be the most commonly understood but the amount varied across the group and for some was much higher, as Vince said, "... and some people say, "Well if you've only had three or four pints you're alright".

The experience of those who were stopped by the police and undertook a breath test, after what the person considered to be usual drinking, may well have re-enforced existing mis-understanding as it did for Dick. When he was stopped and found to be under the legal limit that decreased his concern at his usual drinking level. Otto did not learn from a previous conviction and disqualification because further breath tests proving negative at 3 and a half pints, confirmed that his usual 3 pints were legal. Unusually drinking and driving practice was confirmed for Mark when breath tested three times. It convinced him to stay with his practice of not taking his car when going to the pub.

The intent always to remain below the legal limit was clear for many (see Sykes and Matza 1957). However, in circumstances where both knowing just how much to consume and how much one has consumed were uncertain, the only measure available was how they felt within themselves. As Ed said, "I always felt OK in myself and I thought I was alright." In addition to feeling competent people avoided giving much attention to the matter and "became careless" [Chris] and assumed that they were under the limit

The drinking pattern was inconsistent

The practical understanding of the safe amount to consume was, for many, in doubt. But the self-imposed, acceptable limit of individuals also changed from occasion to occasion and sometimes on every occasion. Tom confirmed that, on top of his limit, one extra pint was not a matter to bother about. For some the actual drinking on occasions was well in excess of what anyone might consider a small amount. For example Colin never "went on drinking sprees" but when lead singing with his music groups would have a couple of pints to get started and then accept the drinks people bought for him throughout the session, and be unaware of how many he did consume. As previously indicated (p.120) heavy drinking occasions could not only be special events but regular events such as a days walking, a Bowls match, or at the end of "your social things" such as sailing, climbing and even most occasions of drinking. Vic took trips out into the Derbyshire countryside during a weekend and called at "different pubs... as you did." This was not thought of as his proper or normal drinking and different amounts were drunk. It was possible for these men to drink heavily and still imagine that they were not drink drivers because their construction of themselves as drinkers was of modest consumers, who will thus be under the legal limit.

Ben, a regular party-goer, put a different gloss on the matter. He believed that, "there was different levels, I mean it's a fact, and although I've learned better now, I've known that ... I've had too much to drink, but still got in the car." For Walt, another visitor to Derbyshire for a relaxed drink, recognised to me that mood was

the determining factor. He would drink up to 6 pints depending “on the mood I’m in. If I’m in a relaxed and everything I’ll drink a lot more...” For him personal circumstances affected the impact alcohol has on the human body and allowed him to consume different amounts. There are those whose culture was to drink heavily on some occasions because it was a part of the professional way of doing business, as for Gary the financial consultant. As so much drinking is part of people’s relaxation, few counted their consumption in precise units. Amounts varied from occasion to occasion, as Keith and Chris both recognised, with the consequence that people may have driven when over the limit and been unaware of it.

Just having a drink was not considered as proper drinking

Some had the absolute rule not to consume any alcohol at all if they had taken a vehicle. This was the case for Vic when he was in the forces. Although it was not expressly forbidden he felt he was on duty and so did not drink and drive when in the forces. Similarly, the young Andy, “picked up my mates and drove to town and parked up and I never had any alcohol whatsoever.” As the interview proceeded he recognised that this had been for a limited time for, “whenever I went out in the car I would hardly ever, ever have a shandy.” Already the absolute is modified if only with a shandy.

It could also be modified by constructing the drink as, in some sense, different and not a proper drink. The absolute rule about not driving when going out for a drink did not apply if, in another context, one ‘just had a drink’. For example Roy never took the car when he went out drinking but if, when working or attending a sporting occasion, he had the car with him he would readily consume a couple of pints. One element within this category is that of felt pressure. No one spoke of being put under direct pressure to drink by friends or associates. Huw made that clear saying, “They used to understand” when he explained that his livelihood was at risk if he drank and then drove. On the other hand there are those who clearly felt under some pressure to conform to an anticipated or expected norm, even though that norm may never have been expressed by anyone. For Ian and others this would occur in the socialising that took place after playing soccer or rugby football. Others experience a similar felt pressure to conform when work ceased early on a Friday afternoon and ‘everyone’ repaired to the nearest pub to drink together to mark the end of the working week and celebrate the coming weekend, before driving home. Sid’s case study showed that stopping on the way home after work may not be considered in the same way as going out for a drink. In this way actual behaviour does not match their notions of not driving after drinking. Others, such as Eric, Owen, Paul, Ray, Clive, Roy, Vic and Alan, indicate a similar pattern as when they had finished work at night calling for a couple of pints and then driving home did not cause them to think of that as drink driving. These drinking times were, for some, not drinking occasions but time when one just had a drink. This was a different construction and allowed a drinking pattern to vary considerably.

Circumstances changed not using the car when drinking

One way of avoiding driving after drinking was not to take the car when the purpose of going out was to drink (see Sykes and Matza 1957). This was a method favoured by over half of the group at some point in their driving careers. Half of these such as Dave, Leo, Nigel, Vince, Will, Alex, Clive, Fred, Ivor, Keith, and Roy describe this as ‘never’ taking the car when they go drinking. For others it is not so clear. For Sid it was ‘on occasions’ or ‘the odd exception’ as for Huw or very rare for Mark or ‘very,

very seldom' for Pat. Tony, Alan and Dan also considered it their regular practice but described how only occasional or special events altered the rule. So it was easy on particular occasions to take the car for many different reasons. This again brings forward the mechanism that the clear construction, of not taking the car, is in fact changed but was felt to still operate.

In spite of clear intention to leave the car behind when out drinking Ray, Tom, Bill, Sam and Jack the intent was changed because the car was parked somewhere not considered safe or in a different place than originally planned. Feeling that the car was, after all, not going to be safe makes some change their mind and drive home after all. Only rarely did people change their minds because of conditions such as the weather, though the convenience of having the vehicle at home next morning was a consideration that weighed strongly with some.

A not unusual method of separating car and drinking was used by Alex, who used at "weekends [to] park up. As soon as Friday, when I finish work, it were parked up and I don't touch it until Monday, going back to work." Yet even this so clear understanding was set aside. His parents were separated and, although his car is parked up, "I drive on Sunday, I drive to me Dad's on Sunday when I get up."

A different method adopted usually by younger people such as Giles. They used a nominated driver system, where the nominated driver would have one drink at the start of the evening and not drink for the rest of the evening. It was possible for circumstances to change and for the nominated driver not to drive. It was also possible for the nominated driver to consume more alcohol than was safe. Usually the nominated driver was the female partner as for Tony who described her as a "definite abstainer" and then admitted that she may if pushed have a glass of wine or two. Both of Len's wives drove if they felt he was getting towards the limit. This mechanism was only as secure as their understanding of the amount he had drunk and the link between this and the legal limit.

Intimate relationships end and personal circumstances alter

Both Ray and Tony recognised that their particular ways of avoiding driving after drinking may not have been consistently adhered to when the breakdown of a relationship changed things. Ray's relationship with his first wife had been difficult and they had periods together and other periods apart. In the latter he recognised at interview that he had "gone pretty much off the rails" and the care he normally gave to not drink driving did not apply in those periods (Adebayo 1991).

Summary

For the subjects in this study the personal rules people had, to keep them safe from driving after drinking, were changed according to feelings, the way a situation was perceived, the conception held about the self as rule bound or free, the alcohol drunk and even whim. They were not maintained in every circumstance for a variety of reasons. This was particularly so if the constructions someone was using were not soundly based for a world was then inhabited in which it was possible to honestly believe that one was safe from prosecution when this was not the case. This was the so when there were incomplete or clearly incorrect understandings about alcohol. Again if at the particular time or with the particular amount of alcohol drunk or if one was not aware of how much had actually been consumed it was possible that one's construction of oneself as a drinker was incorrect. Further, in

particular circumstances, people were able to square their rule with the inconvenient or difficult situation. They assumed that, on this occasion, it would not matter.

Some of these occurred because there were different qualities to the personal rules constructed. Those that arose from general comments, media adverts, the perceived views of their social groups and the 'sound' knowledge that some acquaintances obviously had were possibly built on insecure foundations and be unable to withstand the buffeting of specific triggers. Whereas other rules that derived from a roundly considered position and established when the facts of the case had been taken into account had a quality that allowed them to remain intact and operative under the most severe pressure. It should be part of our policy to ensure that all drivers have personal rules relating to drink driving that are so securely based.

9 HOW SENSIBLE MEN CAME TO OFFEND⁹

One of the criteria adopted for the selection of a part of this group was that some people were multiple offenders. Where I was aware of this I chose a multiple as against a single offender to be a member of the sample. Hence these 48 drivers had between them 83 convictions for UK drink-driving offences and were multi-offenders. There has been a traditional view that multi-offenders and alcohol dependent drivers considerably overlap. As this study found none of the respondents to be alcohol dependent, as shown by the AUDIT scores, the link between these two groups needs examination.

Mayhew and Simpson in earlier studies had made the 'traditional' link but in their 1997 paper (Mayhew et al 1997) they recognised that, "hard core" drinking drivers have several defining characteristics" (p.791) such as "they: often exhibit a variety of antisocial and deviant tendencies, such as aggression, hostility, and thrill seeking; are more likely than non-drinking drivers... to have a criminal history; to use drugs, and to have poor driving records; and frequently consume greater quantities of alcohol per occasion, experience more alcohol-related problems and are more likely to meet *the criteria for a diagnosis of alcohol dependence*".(p.794 italics mine) That is a considerable range of defining characteristics also attested by Nochajski et al (1997) who confirm that "recent research has suggested that measures assessing *characteristics other than drinking*" are useful for detecting repeat offenders and they identify 15 items, among other things, relating to criminal history, aggression, tolerance and interpersonal competence. (p.797 italics mine) In the review of studies, chapter 4, studies that tried to discover the distinctive psychosocial characteristics of drink drivers were reviewed Selzer et al (1977) found that drink drivers are not a homogenous group and an earlier study by Mozdierz et al (1975) of men undergoing a hospital alcohol programme showed two distinct groups one with low accidents or traffic violations and one with higher.

Drinking a lot on a single occasion of drinking now referred to as binge drinking was one predisposing factor for repeat offending (Lange and Johnson 2000) but Lapham et al (2000) found BAC at arrest to have "limited utility" as an indicator of dependence (p.100, also Wieczorek et al 1992a). Looking at Australian re-offenders Siskind et al (2000) found previous drink driving, unlicensed driving and a history of criminal convictions to distinguish them. In attempting to develop a typology of persistent drink drivers Wieczorek et al (2000) again found them not to be a homogenous group. In examining drinking and driving in Stockholm county Karlsson et al (2000) found increased prevalence among alcohol dependent people, a large proportion of high consumers reported drink driving but "the majority of the cases were among low to moderate consumers. (p.151) The American review of our state of knowledge about drink driving (NHTSA 2001) found preferred beverage, quantity and frequency of drinking, drinking location were as much associated as prevalence of drinking problems. We cannot simply assume that repeat offenders are alcohol dependent. Their characteristics are more diverse.

The number of offences committed per person are shown in table 4 below

⁹ This chapter was published as HUTCHINSON P (2000) *How come sensible people drive after drinking?* In Stockholm: Proceedings of the 15th International Conference on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety, ICADTS, 2000

Table 2. Numbers of offences per drink driver offender

<i>No. of offences</i>	<i>Drivers</i>
4	3
3	2
2	22
1	21
Totals 83	48

These were not 83 entirely random occasions of offending for on analysis groups of them have common characteristics and perhaps need to be understood in terms of their commonalities. This is the approach I have taken rather than examining each offence in terms of the particularities of the individual driver and the circumstances appertaining at the time of his offending. These general commonalities form the framework below.

By drinking too much on any one occasion

Some drivers well intentioned plans not to drive after drinking were set aside on particular occasions by drinking too much and that happened on ten of the occasions when these offences took place. When Andy, 22 and not yet the owner of a car, goes out socialising he was not always able to borrow his father's car. Borrowing the car was thus a considered matter. If he did take the car his original tactic was to avoid alcohol altogether. Later this was modified and he allowed himself a drink of shandy and later still the allowance increased to 2 pints spaced over a long period. When he offended he had deliberately left the car as, on this occasion, he expected and wanted to drink. Back home after his evening out he felt hungry and walked to 2 chip shops both of which were closed. By this time he was somewhat disenchanted and without much thought, other than to consider the distance to the third establishment, he decided to drive to this one. He was devastated at his lapse for "what's disappointed me so much [because] there's been so many times that I have consciously left the car or gone out and not drank a sip ... and to get done like that when, just because I was drunk that I took the car." In very different circumstances Ray, when 21, was preparing for his marriage and on top of his day job was also working at a second job in the evenings so he hardly went out drinking at all. It was his usual behaviour, when celebrating, to do it "in style" but on those occasions he always arranged to go and return by taxi. Just before his own wedding he was Best Man at a friend's wedding. As the celebrations continued throughout the day Ray eventually got absolutely drunk. He had no idea how or why he got into the car to drive. "I don't even remember the decision to drive. Now why the car was actually, ... car was there I can't even remember. Why I would have the car when I was Best Man at a wedding ... No." As 19 year old, Alex consistently drank only at the weekend when he parked his car up from arriving home from work on a Friday evening. One Saturday night he went out drinking with his friend. His friend met a girl and decided to go off with her leaving Alex alone. He returned to his parent's empty home and tried to contact his own girlfriend but was unable to find her. His Saturday night out had become not very entertaining and so bored, lonely and drunk; he did what he had done when similarly fed up and went for a "little drive". This ended in an accident. Another young man Giles was a 20 year old student rugby player who, on a day when his team were playing away and he was uncertain how the day would turn out, took his car to a local neighbourhood centre and left it, safely parked. The team were poorly entertained by their hosts

and they all returned early to a pub, close to their home and within their neighbourhood in Sheffield. Here Giles and a friend drank heavily. At the end of their drinking session he realised his car was parked close by and was thus available and they decided to sleep in it but when his friend collapsed on the back seat Giles became worried and decided that he wanted to get his friend home. He drove the short distance home. At 21 years Sam was working all hours, holding down two jobs in order to be financially viable. One job involved working every weekend in a pub at which there was a small fire one Saturday night. The fire brigade were called and the fire dealt with. But when the customers had all left, the staff was faced with the task of clearing up all the mess. It is cleared up by midnight and, knowing he would not now be working there on Sunday, Sam agreed to go to a night-club with two friends. Sam's car was at the pub that he agreed to transport his friends in his car. It was his first evening out for months and he quickly got drunk. At the end of their night-club session they went for a taxi. After a long wait, when the taxi queue did not lessen, because no taxis were arriving, he chose to drive the short distance home. In a very different situation Jack, though a heavy drinker of strong lagers, had always been below the legal limit on the many occasions when he had been breath tested by the police. Aged 23 his account was that he was waiting in his car for some friends so he started to listen to music and "it ended up being quite a long wait you see" so he drank some cans of 9% ABV lager. When his friends finally arrived and he felt, after listening to the music and drinking, that "I'm brilliant sort of thing" he set off. Within yards he drove round a corner and hit another parked car. There was no damage to that car, but the driver, a nurse manager, realised that Jack had been drinking and informed the police.

All the above were in their early 20's (see Arnett 2000), but drunken occasions such as these were not restricted to young men. Otto, 31 at the time of this offence, worked on most days but one bank holiday Monday had a day off. He spent the majority of the day drinking and by 1800 he was drunk though he did not consider that was his condition. He felt the time had come to go home and one of his friends advised him not to drive, because the friend felt he had drunk too much. He offered Otto a lift. This was refused on the grounds that he would, "be alright, it's only down the road." On the way home he had a minor accident and was reported to police by local residents. It was a very different situation for Joe, an occasional drinker in his late 60's. He visited a property he owned on a cold winter day and whilst there did a good turn for a neighbouring resident. This man then invited Joe to come to his own flat to get warm. Whilst there, he gave Joe 2 whiskies. The amount of whisky was unknown although Joe felt one "was a decent one". Although the friend offered to order a taxi for him, Joe did not agree and insisted on his ability to drive home. On the way home he had a minor accident. Similarly, Ben's first offence occurred when he was aged 28 and was already a successful business man used to living a good life. He had recently started a new business in an unfamiliar field but things did not work out well. The new business, in which Ben had invested so much, was going through a very difficult period and Ben was very worried and anxious for many weeks. On New Year's Eve he determined to celebrate in order to forget all about his problems for a while. The last thing he considered was his drinking but he said to me that he should have realised that his drinking was well over the limit but he didn't.

All the above might have realised that on the occasion when they offended they were in fact drunk but it was different for Brian. He was a modest social drinker whose life changed after his divorce. He was adrift and alone but deliberately decided to alter course. He had always been interested in working with people so he left his job and then became a pub landlord. He was very successful in this new career. Drink driving had never featured in his previous life. Although he worked

with alcohol he was a resident publican and so there was no occasion for the need or possibility of his driving after drinking to arise. One very busy evening in the pub, his second wife saw him discussing a matter with a customer in a slightly brusque manner. For him to use such a tone was a very strange thing for him to do and entirely out of character. She felt something was wrong and, concerned for her husband and thinking he was unwell, suggested that she would manage for the remainder of the evening and that he should go to bed at 2130. He accepted and retired to bed but later, when his wife had finished all the clearing up at 0030, she found him missing from their bedroom. Brian had no recall of the incident, but it appears that sometime after the pub closed and when his wife was busy clearing up, he got up from bed, collected his car keys from their safe place then opened the locked garage and took out the car. Piecing together the unknown events, it was conjectured that he drove through the city on the route that would take him to his parent's home. This involved using a dual carriageway road and Brian drove in the outside lane at the speed limit. Somehow a taxi came on to the road, veered into his lane and he caught its rear bumper sending it across the road out of control. It was a bizarre accident that unfortunately caused the death of the passenger in the taxi, killed by the lamppost the taxi hit. This was an accident for which Brian served a term in prison and only the protracted legal processes gave him any knowledge of what had happened.

6 of the 10 people whose accounts are recounted above were youngsters in their early 20's when they offended, 2 others were modest drinkers, one of whom assumed he had had his drinks spiked and the other was given whisky. Whether any of them realised it or not, they were too drunk to take the decisions that would have kept them free from prosecution. The decisions that led them to prosecution were abhorrent to some and unlikely for others; though for two they were reasonably common experiences.

A mental state otherwise occupied

There were six occasions when the circumstance at the time was such that it dominated the thinking of the individuals concerned and became an all consuming consideration for them. Once again two of the offenders were young at the time. One was Will who had two methods for not drink-driving. His primary method was not to take the car to the pub when he went drinking. Also as a single man he used to go away for weekends. These were drinking weekends but he always stayed in the hotels where most of the drinking took place and used taxis if he went out. Yet he offended twice, the first at 19 years of age when, with his older brothers, he had gone to the coast for a weekend's drinking. His eldest brother was the driver. When it came to Sunday evening, and the planned return home, his brothers thought they had had too much to drink and suggested that they slept in the car. Will was opposed to his brothers' plan to sleep in the car until early Monday morning and then drive home, because he felt he must be at work first thing next morning. He persuaded his brothers to set off home on Sunday evening, but his eldest brother, the driver, almost had an accident and they stopped. Will, his mind entirely dominated by his concern to be on time for work, and knowing that there was "no way am I getting up at 5 o'clock in the morning" decided that he would drive. Without further incident on the journey he was routinely stopped and breathalysed. His second offence some years later had similar characteristics. On this occasion Will had been working in Leicester and as he returned to Sheffield he telephoned his brother to confirm the arrangement that they were going drinking, as planned, and that he would collect his brother. Whenever the two were together Will handed over the driving to his brother, who did much less driving than Will. This was what

happened on this occasion. From his brother's home his brother drove Will's vehicle, across the city, to Will's flat and he got ready to go out. They used public transport to get into the city but as they left there was an exchange of keys, though both sets contained a key to Will's car. They drank at different venues throughout the night and then made their own way to their respective homes and Will arrived close to 0600. He had now been awake virtually 24 hours, done a day's work and partied through the night, and his one thought was to get into his flat and into bed. He found that, when they had exchanged keys at the start of their Friday evening out, each was left with the other's set. So Will could not get into his flat and "that's when I thought ... just straight across the city, you know there'll be plenty of traffic and nobody's going to notice me ... your mind plays queer tricks and you kid yourself ... you don't want to do it but you convince yourself." Had he had the key to his flat he would have been "in bed and that would have been [it] until Sunday morning."

Walt at 22 years was a regular, heavy drinker. The 4 or 5 times he had been tested he had always been under the limit although he had drunk 8 or more pints. These confirmations guide his thinking and behaviour. One Christmas Eve, as a shop employee, he had been sipping alcohol in the breaks between serving people. After the shop closed, with his two sisters their boy friends and other friends, he went and drank normally, for him, in their local pub. Prior to their going out he had promised his youngest sister that he would see her safely home and, just after midnight, he proffered the promised lift although he lived only a few yards from the pub and could and would otherwise have walked to his own home. He saw himself as a person who kept his promises and honouring his promise to his sister was his only consideration. "There was no discussion about it, I said I'd give them a lift home and I always like to keep to things I say." It was entirely different for Vince. He was thrilled because he had just sold his car for what he considered a good price. Having no car he walked to meet some friends and together they decided to go out. Vince needed to get ready and borrowed a friend's car, twice for he forgot something the first time, to drive the short distance to get to his home and get ready to go out. On the second journey he was routinely stopped. It was interesting to recognise that in recounting this event he made no mention to me of any drinking! One of Colin's hobbies was renovating and restoring cars. His fourth offence was similar and occurred at the completion of a successful car renovation and sale. Although abstaining at this time, full of his elation he decided that a celebratory drink was needed but driving home another car slewed across the road and hit his car. Although he did not feel responsible he was breath tested.

In a very different situation Tom, a 30 year old married man with two children, whose only drinking was on regular outings with his wife to socialise with family and friends. On these regular meetings they left the car at home and took a taxi to travel to the venue. On the occasion of his offence the family had been out together for the family get together, taken a taxi and returned home by taxi as usual. After their baby sitter had left and gone home Tom accidentally cut his thumb. His wife was already in bed when he panicked at the severity of the bleeding that he could not stop. Rejecting the alternatives of calling for a taxi, because it would take too long to arrive; or of his wife driving, for the children could not be left in bed alone; he concluded that he must drive to the hospital. This he did and eventually received the attention he needed. Without thinking, and he felt all right from his evening's 5 pints, he left the hospital at 0400 and drove home. He was stopped and breath tested on the journey.

Additional emotional turmoil

Similarly, but of greater significance, were those whose mental pre-occupation was compounded by an emotional distress that dulled their sharpness to the realities of drink driving. Fourteen offences fell into this category, two carried out by one middle aged man, Bill. His divorce, and separation from his children, remained a constant pain to him for years. His first offence occurred, shortly after his separation, at a time when the children had been with him for four very happy days. He had returned them to their mother, in another part of the country, driven over 200 miles back to Sheffield and, feeling very miserable, he called into the pub. He had his self-imposed limit of 2.5 pints and returned home, which strongly reminded him of the children who had so recently been present. He was “really depressed, really down, really fed up. The house humming with kids ... you come back – dead, desolate, you look round and well there’s the odd sweet paper they’ve dropped or something like that .. err .. without thinking I had a couple of tins of Wards, of beer”. He felt that he must do something to break the sadness and realising that he has had nothing to eat and was hungry he drove to find something to eat. Being late on Sunday evening there were not many places open and as he drove around he was stopped on the way.

Seven years later Bill was again in a severely stressed state of mind. Three things happened together. First, to his great distress, his wife informed him that she and the children planned to emigrate to Canada. She also chose the same time to ask him for more maintenance money. The final stress compounding his difficulties was that he was declared redundant from his management position. It was also the middle of winter when the weather was not good and he was unable to participate in his favourite activity of sailing. One day when he was driving home in heavy snow and with “what I class as a mega downer” he stopped at a pub for a drink. He felt so miserable that he decided have more to drink, leave the car in the car park and walk home. As he sat drinking, in a virtually empty bar, he was joined by another traveller. This man was walking home and still had a considerable way to go and had simply called in to warm himself and have a drink. After some conversation Bill suggested that the other traveller drive his car as far as Bill’s home. This seemed a sensible arrangement for it would shorten the journey for the man to walk, get Bill’s car to his house and avoid him driving when he has been drinking. The traveller gratefully agreed that he would drive to Bill’s home and then continue his journey on foot. Unfortunately, the traveller proved incompetent in handling Bill’s car in the snow and got it stuck as they left the pub car park. Bill tried to push the car free and was unable to do so. With no more thought, other than a few choice words at his companion’s driving ability, Bill took over the driving to get them going. A passing police patrol, stopped to assist, and also breath tested him.

Ken also had a sustained period of misery. Again it was a number of matters that came together. He was in his final year as an undergraduate and feeling the pressure. His parents had gone abroad on a two year sailing trip and he was feeling both their absence and envious of their trip. Then his house was both burgled and ransacked and a few days later his car was stolen and smashed up. He could not contact his parents and to compound matters his studies were not going well. When his car was repaired he decided to have a break “to sort of clear my head and get myself sorted out for the final furlong of my course” and drove with a friend to Switzerland for a skiing holiday. No sooner had they arrived on the holiday than his friend smashed his kneecap skiing. It was imperative that they returned home. The holiday turned out to be another disaster and nothing more than an extended drive for Ken. The evening he arrived back home and he felt miserable and drove a few

streets away to join some other student friends. They drank together and without a thought for the consequences Ken drove back home in the early hours of the morning, when he was stopped.

Many witnessed to a change in their drinking style when a relationship ends¹⁰. When this was compounded with the additional stress of being refused access to the children (Frank) or a disagreement over finances (Dave) or unpleasantness with the children (Ivor) the result was, in each case, uncontrolled drinking followed by unconsidered decisions to drive. However, the majority of these instances were one-off events, though they could be, as with Otto when he offended for the second time, a period of a few weeks of regularly drinking more than normal and not caring about the consequences. For Harry and Walt it concerned serious arguments with girl friends. As Harry simply expressed to me that he was so upset at the row that he "went out and got drunk and got in my car and that were it". Walt was more concerned at the possibly severe consequences for his girlfriend. She had herself been drinking, came looking for him and found him talking to another girl in the pub and in his words "went ballistic". They both got into his car and continued to argue but his girlfriend got out and started to walk away in the opposite direction to home. Walt followed behind to protect her and was reported to the police as a potential stalker. In more pleasant circumstances Mick had a farewell party with colleagues as he left a secure local authority job to set up his own business. After the party, happy and without thinking, he took a disabled friend home.

Paul, for his second offence, and Pat, on the occasion of his first offence, were at funerals that deeply affected both of them. Each, unaware of how the time had moved on, became suddenly aware of a responsibility to be undertaken. Each without further thought set off in their cars to complete the tasks for which they were responsible. In a similar vein, one Sunday Sid was sad for it was the second anniversary of his mother's death. At the bowling club he changed his plans and stayed to drink more than he intended as he drowned his memory. Leaving the club late at night he saw his van parked there from the previous day and suddenly thought to drive his vehicle home now "instead of walking up the next morning, which is only 10 minutes walk".

Sam, having left the Navy, was making a new career for himself as a pub manager. Two weeks prior to Christmas, on his day off, he was telephoned, just as he arrived at his local pub in the evening, to be told that his workplace pub had been attacked by vandals and smashed up. He left his drink untouched and drove to the pub he managed. He reviewed the damage, handled its closure and dealt with boarding it up against further damage. Although newly refurbished it was in a dreadful state and would need to be closed for some weeks to be renovated. Before he left, the area manager arrived to inspect the damage and consoled him with the news that it had already been agreed that he was to be offered a new pub. This had been planned for some two months hence and, in view of the night's events; he would be without work until then which news "went down like a sack of potatoes." Devastated he set off to drive home but had to pass his local pub, so he stopped with the intention of having a consoling drink and walking home. In fact he drank until he was drunk. He then went for some food and, finding the police there, "I just wasn't bothered at all. I even walked up to the sergeant and put my keys down by the side of him and that were it. Ordered my meal and walked outside and saw them, they

¹⁰ See HUTCHINSON P (2000) Is there a common drinking pattern of convicted drink drivers? Stockholm: Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety, Proceedings of the 15th International Conference on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety, ICADTS, 2000

were waiting for me. I wasn't bothered and jumped in the car and drove and I was probably 300 or 400 yards from my house when they pulled me." He was breathalysed.

Thus a quarter of the offences are occasions when individual's mental states were such that they did not think clearly or straightforwardly nor act in their normal way.

Ignorance of alcohol

In a further eighteen cases, had the person had accurate knowledge of alcohol, there would have been no offence. Five had no idea how long it took for alcohol to leave the body so Mick, who had offended once and was carefully leaving his van behind when he went drinking, was "sure" that by 0500 he was safe to go and collect his van and start work. Likewise Dan, a careful HGV driver, was stopped on his way to work the morning after drinking the previous evening. Dick went to and returned from a Saturday evening party by taxi and had little idea that he was well over the limit early next morning when he went fishing. Huw called at the pub, not to drink alcohol but to see someone. He then discovered that a birthday party was taking place so he decided that he would leave the car in the car park and stay drinking. At closing time he walked home, with a friend, and watched something on TV. At 0230 he walked part way home with his friend and decided to collect his car because "it was four hours since I'd last had a drink and I'd had something to eat... and I really thought I was alright." Another who underestimated the time taken to clear the body of alcohol was Fred who always parked his car for the weekend when he drank. On one occasion he agreed to collect his girlfriend from work at Sunday teatime only to find he was over the limit from Saturday evening's drinking.

Keith, at a lunchtime family funeral where a meal and drinks were available, stayed on with relatives. By the end of the afternoon he moved on to soft drinks and when he decided to leave at 2315, "I thought I was safe enough to drive home. I thought I was under the limit" but he wasn't. Others did not know of the cumulative effect of alcohol so Nigel's third offence occurred when, having left his car at the pub on Saturday night after a party, he went to collect it at 1130 on Sunday morning and met a friend so had another drink! Owen's second offence, 8 years after his first, occurred, on a Friday, when he drank a couple of pints "during [the] day time at work" and then drove home after work. He then had another couple of pints in town as he collected money in order to go out and "another pint" on the way home yet was surprised that he was over the limit because he did not know "how long it takes to go through my system and I think this is what's done me more than owt."

Ed, an occasional and modest drinker, began to drink more at home on medical advice, and then at a time of stress his drinking became more regular and consistent. One Sunday, he took his wife out for lunch and they were involved in an accident. He'd had one can on Sunday morning, after finishing some jobs he wanted to do, and when he was taken to the police station and found to be being over the limit, "I must admit I couldn't believe it, I was devastated, I just cracked up. You know tears and all that, crying, I just couldn't believe it." Chris, was another who for most of his adult life was an occasional drinker, but was drinking more at a time of stress. He had no idea that sipping peach wine in the morning would make him unsafe to drive to work for his shift in the middle of the afternoon. Similarly five others (Joe, Keith, Gary, Pat, and Len twice) did not know that the amount they had drunk would bring them anywhere near the legal limit. Roy, Alan on his second offence, Ian on his fourth offence and Gary had no idea of the strength of their drink and that what to them were 'modest' amounts put them over the limit. Erratic driving

brought Ivor to police notice but because he had been working with and was carrying in the car some chemicals he was able to convince himself that he "could have been over through the drink and" the other chemicals. The Intoximeter only measures alcohol but he continued to remain unsure whether it was only his 2 pints that brought him over the limit, although he had no idea of the strength of the drinks he had consumed.

After 'normal' drinking

Another twenty-three offences were committed after the drivers had participated in what can only be called normal drinking for the individual concerned. For those committing these offences, their understanding of the relationship of alcohol to driving and their ways, if any, of seeking to avoid offending, were examined in detail. This led me to the conclusion that 12 of these 23 offences would not have occurred if the person concerned had been better informed about alcohol and understood his own drinking. It was not that they had set out or intended to offend but rather the reverse. Many (Harry, Clive, Paul and Ian on their first offences, Nigel on two occasions, and Owen on his second offence) had no understanding of the level of drinking that would bring them to the legal limit and believed that by only drinking two pints on any single occasion they would be safe. In none of their cases was the strength of the alcohol drink considered. Nor was the cumulative effect of alcohol considered and they had no idea how long it takes for alcohol to be metabolised. So Clive avoided heavy drinking in an evening prior to driving to work in Leeds at 0400 but still got caught and Nigel, having been on a normal night's drinking gave a friend a lift home and was found to be over the limit.

Having already offended twice, Colin believed he had moderated his drinking because he no longer went out on binges. His drinking pattern had only changed in one element and he did not recognise that in other respects it remained the same. So, when performing as a musician, he has changed neither his understanding nor his practice and when he drank did so at approximately the same level as he always had done. He was not able to be precise as to amounts in these performing situations, where drinks were frequently offered to him. Only rarely did he allow himself to stay and continue drinking after a performance but was caught in that circumstance on one occasion. Later he avoided the problem by using a driver and then later by ceasing to perform. Another part of his total pattern of drinking, already mentioned, that he did not consider was when having bought a car cheaply, spent time and energy doing it up and he sold it on at a profit. Whenever he did this he celebrated with a few drinks. Colin's knowledge of his actual alcohol consumption was incorrect and was compounded by his desire to and actual changing some elements of his drinking pattern whilst other elements remained as they always had been.

A further group of 7 people, with 9 offences, saw drink driving as a matter of legality, unrelated to their drinking. They had not met any scientific evidence on the effect of alcohol. Their consistent way of drinking was to drink to a level, whatever that was, at which they "feel all right". In spite of an expressed confidence that this feeling implied that they would be under the limit that limit was covered in mystery and uncertainty. Most had known of someone who offended and this raised doubts in some of their minds about their definition. The usual way of covering the possibility that their uncertain measure might be wrong was to accept that what was required of them was to avoid being caught. This demanded careful skilled driving or a deliberate choice of either route or the time of driving once drinking occurred. Eric (55), Guy (53), Vic (52, 58), and Neil (44), with their ages at the time of the

offence shown, came into this group as did Pat, Ben and Tony who were younger. There were two in which the personal pressures were such that offending would not have been avoided. Colin, when a young lead singer in a group, at that time only thought of his music and his lifestyle and not his drinking. Jim lived for over twenty years in an angry, barren relationship and worked long shifts, seven days a week. He went to the pub after every shift and drank to avoid going home. Both were keen drivers and had little understanding of alcohol and drove after drinking as long as they felt OK.

Another variation for this normal style of drinking group was that the normal drinking was altered on one occasion. The most frequent occurrence for this was the person having, for whatever reason, an additional pint beyond what the person normally drank. Almost always that normal quantity was what he imagined was a safe drinking limit. This was the case for Dick, on his second offence, when his self-imposed limit of 2 pints was raised by an extra pint before driving the relatively short journey home.

By changing the intention to leave the car

On five occasions the intention to leave the car was changed. Three of these feared for their car's safety. Leo, part way through a wedding feast, felt the time had come to take the car home to ensure its safety. He then intended to return to the wedding reception. Mark's intent was to return to his parent's home after his drinking. He then felt that he had drunk too much and decided to stay at his girl friend's, a mere 300 yards from the pub. He then realised that his previous car had been stolen from the pub car park and he believed his father would be angry with him if it happened again. He decided to move the car the short distance to the safety of his girl friend's home. Similarly Tony's second offence occurred when he drove home after remembering that a previous car had been broken into. Ray, on an occasion when he had played rugby, took his car to the match and then changed his mind and decided to go to the meal at a pub afterwards. Again his intent was to leave the car in the pub car park but was then persuaded to drive his drunken brother-in-law home because he had become unwell. In a different scenario, Tom met his friends locally and when they decided to go to town, drove a short distance home to park his car before they all took a taxi to town.

By not fully understanding the law

Finally there was a group of 8 offences where there was no intention of committing an offence but an offence was committed. Many of those involved in this group considered these as merely technical offences. For example, both Ian and Mick were involved in separate but strong arguments with women. Ian's ex-wife had previously damaged his car and during a row to which the police were called again threatened to damage his car. As the police were present he asked them to remove the car to safety and so avoid the damage and a possible offence. The police refused and apprehended him when, a short time later, he moved the car 200 yards to safety. Mick's row was whilst he and his companion sat in the car. No driving was involved but when the police were called he was apprehended. Likewise Clive with his wife were unexpectedly invited and attended a party a few yards from their home. The car was parked outside. As the evening progressed an argument started and matters became a little unpleasant. Clive did not want to be involved so went and sat in his car to smoke a cigarette. When the police were called he was charged. Neither Mick nor Clive understood that a part of the offence is 'being in

charge of a vehicle whilst unfit to drive'. Neither had any intention, at that time to drive, but that is irrelevant in UK law. Again Alan arrived at a wedding reception when the car park was full. He parked his car at the entrance in what he considered was a bad position. As soon as other cars left he moved his car 50 metres to park it more correctly and safely in the car park. He still considered it a technical offence. Neil fell asleep in his car, when it was parked outside his home on a wide section of pavement, on a sunny day when no driving was involved. Similarly, Mark, whose car was stolen from his parents' home when they were on holiday and he was at the pub some distance away, could not convince the police that he had not taken his own car and driven it. He refused to give the police a breath sample and was convicted on that count.

Discussion

The situations and reasons why sensible men came to drive after drinking were complex. The preceding results show that the largest group of almost half of the drivers believed they would not have offended had their understanding of the amount of alcohol consumed, the amount that would bring them to the legal limit, the time to metabolise alcohol, the cumulative effects of alcohol and similar knowledge of facts about alcohol been accurate (Lennox and Quimby 1990). To illustrate further, at the start of the post-conviction rehabilitative course all these offenders undertook they were given a simple basic 10 question alcohol knowledge quiz (see Appendix 4). The number of people and the correct answers they scored of 40 from this group were recorded as:

Table 3. Correct scores of the group on an Alcohol Knowledge Quiz.

<i>Score</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>People</i>	4	2	9	5	5	12	3
<i>%</i>	10	5	22.5	12.5	12.5	30	7.5

Half these people scored no more than 50% on a test that in any other sphere of life would be considered very straightforward. It was further evidence of the limited knowledge these people had gained about the nature of the substance they consumed and its effects, some of them in a lifetime of drinking. Clearly for some even a conviction gave no new information or evidence and they remained as vulnerable as before. Elsewhere¹¹ this group was recognised by their view that drinking was a social pleasurable activity, undertaken with friends. As such it was an unconsidered activity and just something that was done.

Neither can one escape the conclusion that the way in which driving after drinking is considered was less than accurate. Underlying many of the actions reported here was an understanding of drink driving that equated to drunk driving, and that, in the majority of situations, these people were not doing. Even when there were high BAC readings these were only considered in relation to how the person felt (Wieczorek at al 1992a). No one was counting units of alcohol prior to offending and the only measure they used was one of internal feeling and a quite personal scale concerning safety to drive. If any external measure had been adopted it would

¹¹ *ibid*

have been another person's drinking or the vague notion of what an 'alcoholic' must consume¹².

This study also begins to show how some people found themselves entirely engrossed in their internal struggles as they came to terms with relationships that ended, separation from children, emotional trauma and distress at life events. They were largely preoccupied with some matter that left them, with uncertain understandings and practices, vulnerable to prosecution.

However, the deeper understanding of why sensible men come to drive after drinking is likely to be found in the personal and social constructions they have of themselves as men who both drive and drink. That must be the subject of another chapter.

¹² *ibid*

10 WHAT THIS STUDY HAS SHOWN US

Introduction

At this point it seems appropriate to set out the theoretical foundations of this study. There are three major pillars. The first is that of Burkitt's (1991) model of personality development whose antecedents go back to Mead (1928). Burkitt saw personality as socially constructed, first from the social relations of production, communication and power that are not static but a network of changes. He saw consciousness, motivation and emotions crystallising within this network. To this he added human historical development that gave a structural unconscious, also thought of as things that are not spoken about. A third level, again behaviour we never think about is habit. He saw each person having capacities, Mead's I or subjective conscious, in dialogue with his 'me', objective self, to which Burkitt added what Freud called 'it', expressed drives and emotions that become unknown forces that drive us and that Mead did not recognise. This is a loss of control by the 'I' over an individual's actions because there is an element within us that mirrors the values of society as a whole as we see them [the 'over-I'].

The second pillar comes from Goffman's (1963) work on social identity, as he examined the stigmata we all bear and saw arising out of a language of relationships and not as individual attributes. He identified a discrepancy between a 'virtual' and an 'actual' social identity and normative expectations are a virtual not an actual social identity. He also saw a personal identity that is individual, reflexive and conveyed through social expression such as symbols, visible, and in which our normative expectations are stereotypical unless changed by personal experience. Like social identity, personal identity divides up a person's world for him. He also took, from Erikson, the idea of ego identity, what one feels, often ambivalent about oneself. But "a necessary condition for social life is the sharing of a single set of normative expectations by all" (p.152) though a "mere desire to abide by the norm ... is not enough, for in many cases the individual has no immediate control over his level of sustaining the norm." (p.153) This he called deviation, seen as the context that bridges the above to rest of the social world.

This leads to the third pillar from Matza and Sykes (1957) concepts that saw deviants as not coming from a separate sub-culture of norms and values but as people accepting societal norms and values and using techniques of neutralisation to allow themselves to move between two sets of norms and values whilst they kept their selfhood.

These three pillars link closely with the social learning theory, reviewed in chapter 4, where the greatest influences determining the way people learn to consume alcohol are parental and family influences; gender and expectancies. These are culturally determined and develop the attitudes, values, beliefs, social norms and perceived norms that lead to the constructions we hold about ourselves and which direct much of our behaviour.

Throughout this study reference to the 'constructions' held by those interviewed has been made. It includes four central elements. It is first, the way that people see themselves. Such perceptions are the key to the way in which they believe they act. This does not necessarily accord with actual behaviour and as the perception is a judgement it may, in Goffman's terms, be virtual not actual. Many interviewed saw themselves as modest drinkers, based on the observations of the amounts other

drinkers consume; conversations with others about how much they consume; the regularity with which others seemed to go drinking; ideas gained from the media of the sort of drinking that was normal. Such drinking may bear no relation to one session of drinking that brings one to or above the legal limit. As we have seen throughout the study such perceptions of themselves were of relevance to these men as drinkers.

A second element is the way people see the world in which they operate and the attitudes, beliefs and perceived norms they hold about it. As an example, to see cars parked in public house car parks; to engage in conversations that make light of, or do not consider as driving, using a car to go a short distance; the construction of that world may not identify such journeys as actual driving. It may be construed that 'everyone' drinks small amounts, as allowed by the law, and drives short distances and it is the law that is at fault in defining such an action as a criminal act and not recognising this as usual and normal behaviour.

A third element of construction is the sense people make of what is and has happened to them. Thus, some in this study believed that the police were determined to apprehend them (e.g. Otto, "I don't know what they've got against me", Ian, Roy, Walt or Jim, young and driving a 4.2 Jaguar); went to considerable lengths so to do (e.g. 10 squad cars arrived when Ben was stopped); and that the police used a failure to get a breath sample to get a conviction (e.g. Mark who refused because he was not driving). With such beliefs it was possible perceive such a conviction not to be a 'true' one (e.g. Pat stopped for defects to his car). Hence a conviction in such circumstances was construed, as a matter of police practice, 'pot luck' or simply being unlucky.

The further characteristic of such constructions is that they are stable and often only slowly adapt to new circumstances. Hence so many of this group, when young drinkers, gathered money together, met their friends and 'went out drinking' on one or possibly two occasions each week. This resulted in them construing drinking in such terms, so that drinking is 'going out for a drink'. Long years after it remains the same construction and occasions of calling for a drink because of thirst, or spending unoccupied time or marking the end of the working day is not considered as drinking and is not taken into account in relation to drink driving.

Finally people construe their behaviour in accordance with how they see themselves. To stay with the example just given, if someone believes he only 'goes out drinking' on planned occasions and always takes a taxi drink driving is construed as 'not something I do'.

Hence my argument is that the people in this study failed in their driving actions to remain non-drink drivers essentially because the constructions on which the action-behaviour rested related to their virtual rather than actual identities.

Conclusions

There are some clear conclusions from this study. I begin with those that relate directly to the drinking drivers themselves and from these conclusions to draw out the implications for policy.

In chapter 5 the concept of drinking pattern was examined and from the analysis of the interviews it was possible to identify key elements in a personal drinking pattern. These were: frequency of drinking; type of alcohol consumed; quantity consumed;

situations and circumstances in which drinking 'naturally' or inevitably takes place and whether this is haphazard and unrestricted or reserved to particular times; constraints to the frequency pattern, for example not with work, weekend only; and habitual consistent. It needs to be noted that these items can all be placed under the title of 'construction' and thus be matters the individual undertakes without volitional consideration. The study also identified and defined drinking style. This consisted of and was defined, in chapter 5, as: the location of drinking; the drinking companions or whether drinking alone; the purpose of the drinking; and the conditions that direct the style both past, including the introduction to drinking, and present.

The analysis also went on to indicate that people have many different drinking patterns that change in response to life's circumstances and consequential lifestyle changes. It was also clear from the analysis that some people did not recognise these changes in their drinking pattern or style either at all or until after some time, such as two or three years after a mother's death (Sid). For others the construction they held of their drinking pattern belonged to their 'virtual' rather than 'actual' identity (Goffman 1963). It is thus important for drinkers to be aware of their drinking patterns and drinking style and for these to be constantly updated.

Driving was a wanted skill and car ownership a desire for these men as chapter 6 showed. Thus these men drove prior to legal age, though often off road; they passed the driving test at the earliest available opportunity, when 17 or 18, for the vast majority; and the car often had a symbolic character for the individual. The analysis showed that the largest majority owned and drove vehicles to get to and from work and for the utilitarian journeys connected with family life or a major pleasure pursuit. It was the majority of these journeys that were considered as driving but they were not the only driving occasions. Many other journeys were undertaken that held no significance for the person concerned and were not considered as 'driving'. This is another area where Goffman's (1963) distinction between virtual and actual social identity and Matza's (1957) recognition that the law abiding social attitudes and values were held by the group, applied. However, deviance occurs if drivers fail to construe any journey, however short or insignificant, as 'driving' and thus not to apply the desired rule not to drink and drive may lead to an offence.

One of the main conclusions of this study was that there was a considerable lack of knowledge about alcohol, how the body deals with it, the effects it has and how to be certain that one is below the legal limit for driving. These matters were reported in chapter 7 though the scores obtained at the simple Alcohol Knowledge Quiz (see Appendix 4) were given on page 143. The system of alcohol units was devised as a simple way for people to count their consumption. Yet few of this group understood that to calculate a unit requires knowledge of the quantity consumed and the alcohol strength of the drink. Again, whilst the absorption and metabolism of alcohol is extremely complex and the subject of continuing study (Plant and Cameron 2000) there are simple rules that can be applied. The analysis also showed that some drivers felt they knew themselves better after drinking and that alcohol improves performance, though neither belief is supported by evidence. The analysis showed that when unaware of the knowledge, most people judged whether to drive or not by how they felt.

Chapter 4 showed that in our culture drinking is a social activity shared by family or friends in a leisure context, that is constantly changing and re-defining itself, and this study confirmed, see chapter 5, that this was the case for these men. The analysis showed that many had little clear idea of how many alcohol units they had

consumed on any one occasion. This led me to conclude that for many knowing how much alcohol is consumed is an anathema, antithetical to and destructive of social drinking. But to be a non drink driver people need to know when drinking takes place, how much is consumed and for how long it remains in the body and it is not adequate to replace these facts with feelings of having had too much or too little, of being alright and quite capable or even of the certainty that the proof of being under the limit would be a breath test. As a legal limit is precise it implies a similar precision regarding their drinking for those drivers who do not intend to be drink drivers, for they need to be able to define a particular level of alcohol in the blood. The behaviour that is required to be a non-drinking driver operates on a different dimension and direction from the construction of social drinker held by many.

Another finding, relating to social drinking, is that there is a distinction between 'going for a drink' and 'having a drink', also reported in chapter 5 where the nature of the distinction is analysed. A common mechanism for these drinkers was not to distinguish between those occasions when, whatever the accepted purpose of their action, the actuality was to 'have a drink' of alcohol from those occasions when they 'went for a drink'. Such occasions of 'having a drink' had many possible characteristics. Some examples were accompanying a spouse or female partner on a shopping trip when, while the woman was doing the shopping, the man slipped into a nearby pub to while away the time and naturally have a drink. Other examples were occasions of spending unplanned unproductive time for example, when waiting for someone or something. Others had social characteristics as when an old friend or acquaintance was met by chance and they repaired to the nearest pub to chat for a few minutes and have a drink. There may even have been celebratory elements such as, on a days fishing, catching a large fish and stopping at the first pub for a pint. Such examples were times when alcohol was consumed, but were not considered as 'going for a drink' and, if the amount is small enough, even as 'drinking'. Going for a drink was an integral element in the construction of drinking whilst the other was disregarded. For any driver these are clearly prime occasions for driving with alcohol in the body. This is particularly so if care is taken when 'going for a drink' and as a result you construe yourself as not a drink driver. Clearly one of the requirements needed to avoid drink driving is to construe one's social drinking to include any and all consumption of alcohol.

As significant finding of this study is that the majority did not want to be drink drivers so they developed personal rules as shown in chapter 8. The analysis of those rules was complex because it showed that some did not, in fact, have at all times a rule. This was because they felt in their circumstances at the particular time they didn't need a rule indeed, in some cases, felt so confident that they didn't need to think about it. There were also times when some did not have rules because they were in too much of a mess to think about it following personal tragedy or others that as they didn't really know about alcohol. Others as some times had invalid rules because their constructions about events were inaccurate, such as sitting in a car listening to the radio and drinking is legal; or as they felt alright or drove safely or so as not to attract police attention they would avoid prosecution. Others made sensible rules not to take the car when going drinking or to let sober others do the driving. Assuming that it is possible to legally have alcohol in the body and drive some chose to limit amount of alcohol drunk or to space their drinking over time. Both of these latter required a level of knowledge about alcohol and themselves that they did not always possess. These seem to support Matza's and Sykes (1957) position. One of their commonalities was that, whilst rules changed over time, it was usually only slowly.

Rules were set aside in circumstances that had common features and these were analysed in chapter 9. There we saw that rules were modified in practice because the amount of alcohol to exceed the limit was not clear to the person or the drinking pattern was inconsistent or not fully known. Again just having a drink was not considered as proper drinking so the rule could be set aside. Rules may be impervious to many changed situations and were set aside because events changed 'not using' the car or because personal circumstances altered. Differential time frames also operated in that whilst social constructions can change immediately, following some dramatic incident, they generally were much slower to respond to changing circumstances.

There is a clear link, in many research studies in this field seen in chapter 4, between the drink drive offender and addicted drinking or drinking that is so consistently heavy as to be considered as problem drinking. How should such people be dealt with in a drink driving context? The AUDIT evidence for those in this study, see chapter 5, showed no one was addicted, though four had decided to stop or cut down some after medical advice, and almost none would have accepted the description of problem drinker even though drinking had, for some, caused them many problems. But they all had, at some time, been heavy drinkers and many were used to being inebriated. There may well have been, for some, a construction underpinning others that they held, that drinkers of alcohol become exempt from some of the expectations on other people because, when drinking, they are not themselves in some degree. Drinkers are allowed some latitude in ordinary behaviour. For example many in this study had changed their expectation of themselves, that they would leave the car and not drive after drinking, and had done the opposite. The question must be about the level of alcohol drinking – does the allowance it is expected that family or friends or other people or society or the law will give to drinkers only occur when they are clearly inebriated? How does such accommodation relate to motorists – when they are at the legal limit, when they feel unfit to drive or when they have any alcohol in the body? Are they able to do as they please as long as no else is affected? In fact the law relating to drinking and driving cuts through all such questions and does not recognise any driver's alcohol consumption as in any way minimising the offence, but the reverse. The greater the BAC of any drink driver when offending the greater is the culpability.

Intention is a key element in English law. It appears that the law is based on positivist principles and in essence accepts that people are rational beings, whose actions flow from clear thought and motivation. The actuality is that intention is difficult to comprehend and a slippery notion to deal with. There are recognised ameliorating circumstances, such as mental illness and inebriation, that affect intent and thus the law's response to an offence carried out under such conditions (MacAndrew and Edgerton 1969). Once a small limit of alcohol in a driver's body is reached s/he is manifestly not able to function as well as without alcohol present but there is a question as to how intention, which may be not to drive and not to render oneself incompetent, relates to that action. It appears that from 1806 the law has not considered intent to ameliorate the fact of being over a set limit of alcohol. The same manoeuvre may also be true of a whole range of other things, such as how tired a driver is, to give only one example. Yet drivers are not, at present, prosecuted for tiredness unless that results in some incident affecting others. Should this be the criterion regarding drink driving? Some interviewed argued that it should and as long as no one else is affected no action should be taken to be, in other contexts, what MacAndrew and Edgerton (1969) call "the within limits clause" (p.73). The counter argument is that no one should have the right to deliberately put others at risk and that it is too late to act when some accident has occurred and others are injured even fatally.

It is hard to be absolutely clear about any intention one's own as much as any other persons. Yet, as far as can be judged from the analysis of the interviews with these men, there was little or no intention by almost anyone to be a drink drive offender. The great majority had no intention to offend, were not trying to offend and indeed were trying not to do so, though some, on whatever basis, did drive with alcohol in the body. This recognition is important, not just for the statement it makes about this group, but because such a conclusion affects the direction in which the insights from this study are gathered. The analysis of the information from the interviewees ceases to be a discovery of particular characteristics of personality, social situation or demography. Rather the reflection on the study becomes an examination of how and why the majority of these men failed in their attempt not to drink-drive.

Much of the analysis reported in this study has explored the inadequacies of people's constructions. To see them in generalised terms and explore their general characteristics is to move to a different and more tentative level of reflexion. As generalisations and abstractions there were some common mechanisms in use. It is to these that we turn to next.

The mechanics by which social constructions led to offending

The first matter to be recognised was that there was no single mechanism that applied to all the men in this study. Their failures were personal and individual, though there were some common features. As well as the personal nature of constructions and the situations that led to their failure, there were some general considerations to be borne in mind.

It has not been part of this study to discover how constructions developed for people or to define some very general social constructions. Yet one commonly held construction of this group, shown in chapter 7, was that, when thinking of drink drivers, "I am not like that". Thus the general social norm creates images and sends messages that enable drivers such as these to relax. It seemed as if the social norm held of drink drivers in fact concentrates on a small, but very important, group of drink drivers who are involved in serious traffic accidents. This links with the interest of media coverage of drink driving that inevitably concentrates its cover on clear, even sensational, incidents. It is possible to go further and recognise that the focus of the Department for Transport publicity campaigns has often been limited to the serious consequences of drink driving. This means that the social norms of drink driving and drinking drivers are lacking in clarity and precision and do not accord with the way in which the majority of these drivers construed their view of themselves.

Another element in the imprecise construction of drink driving is the unclear amount of alcohol, expressed as actual drinks, one is legally allowed before being 'unfit to drive'. Hence people are uncertain and so define the 'allowance' as 1, 2, 4 pints or many other amounts with heavier drinkers assuming larger amounts (Schechtman et al 1999). The legal limit is precise but it is expressed in terms that the ordinary driver does not relate to or understand. It is not expressed in terms of 'only drink this amount prior to driving' nor can it be for individual variations are considerable. Thus the general result was that there were some very imprecise constructions held, allowing individuals to opt out of construing themselves as potential drink drivers often because of confusion.

The allied implication of this confusion is that drivers are thrust back on to other measures largely relating to themselves. So individual constructions, in this study, showed a range of felt perceptions such as 'I felt OK' to drive (Paul) and did so. Other constructions were that it was legal to drive 'as long as I feel safe' (Ben) or that 'the matter is meaningless for me' (Harry). There were others who felt that because they did not know what the limit was they would hold to figures that other people offered them. Working on that principle, other individuals, for what seemed to them good reasons, assumed that, for reasons peculiar to themselves, they would be able to consume a different amount of alcohol to other people and be able to drive legally. Sometimes that amount was less than others accepted because the person was physically small or not a regular drinker but as frequently the amount was raised because the person felt he was a regular drinker or drank heavily or was able to hold his drink well or always ate with his drink. Yet others construed that, as the topic was difficult, they were better not taking the car when going drinking as a resolution of the uncertainty.

In this way I can begin to see that imprecise constructions about 'drink driving' and drink drivers were developed both generally and particularly. These were not defined in accordance with the law but with perceived norms and other personal, social and cultural beliefs.

A further implication is that, because drinking is a social and leisure activity in which friends meet in relaxed informal atmospheres (MORI 2001), it is an obvious conclusion that regulations, officialdom and the law do not operate. One of the influences upon adults' drinking is family, particularly parents, and also the adolescent peer group (see chapter 4). One of the characteristics the majority spoke about was their commencement of drinking prior to the legal age to purchase alcohol. Many spoke of the sense of bravado in this drinking and the lengths to which they, as a group, went to obtain the alcohol (Harry). From an early age people had a view of drinking alcohol as at least a risqué, common activity that all did but which needed to be kept from parents and adults. This may be one of the roots by which people assume that the force of law does not apply to this social, pleasant activity. Such a conclusion is unfortunately false.

Just as the constructions held about drinking have problematic relationships with 'not drinking and driving' so do some of those relating to being a driver. For many, their constructions of driving were shaped by a culture devoted to the motor car and people spoke of their love of cars and driving, ambitions to own particular ones and the willingness to spend much leisure time with cars. However, the majority of their actual driving was the utilitarian getting to and from work and social activities. Much of this functional driving was considered and care was taken to ensure that one remained accident and trouble free. But driving in one's own car, unrestricted by the demands of employment, and accompanied by friends, might be a very different matter. No one was asked or spoke about illegal driving but there were many clues in their accounts of the sense of freedom as well as of convenience their personal driving held for them. There were indications that some motivations for driving were emotional relating to particular moods or stresses. Driving the car in these circumstances gave relief and pleasure. Much of this driving was not linked to consideration about any alcohol consumed.

As with drinking some constructions of driving were partial because they did not relate to the totality of driving. This may be because it was a short journey, often measured by as little as a few minutes walk, to complete a task such as obtaining food, money or cigarettes, going to a shop, visiting friends, collecting a family

member, pursuing a leisure activity even going to hospital for treatment. In such situations it is the task rather than the driving that was considered and the tasks did not relate to drink driving.

It is an obvious conclusion that when the constructions that are required to keep anyone as a non drink driver are either imprecise or based on false or incomplete beliefs or are partial, along any one of a number of significant parameters, they will prove inadequate to protect from prosecution.

There is also another common situation when people are so engrossed with some internal struggle, whatever its character, that they "just never" think about any aspect of not drink driving. Matters that were not considered and disregarded were the normal level of drinking; the usual style of drinking; the place of drinking; the using of the car; and any other matter that might be part of a personal rule system to not drink drive. People expressed these times as ones when they "were not thinking straight" or "just not with it" or so upset that getting to see someone or ease the pain in some way overrode all other considerations and nothing else mattered. In general, this is a mechanism that individuals are unlikely to correct without a deal of personal assistance for by their nature the matters are beyond the person's normal thresholds and tolerance. There may be questions as to whether public policies should address this vulnerable group.

Implications for public policy

In turning to matters of public policy, there are implicit questions about the way in which individuals relate to and are a part of a larger society. The role of the state is in question and whether it has the right, responsibility and power to direct, seek to control or require particular behaviour and in what circumstances. There were some that considered such powers were limited and did not and should not apply to leisure activities and personal time as they construed them. That argument is simplistic in that it takes no cognisance of the effect of any action and does not recognise that the leisure activities of a considerable proportion of the adult population, who drive vehicles, have many social effects. To withdraw from seeking to regulate, in some way, the vehicle use of such a high percentage of the population would be a step that no modern government would be able to take.

On the other hand there is an argument that all public policy in this country relating to alcohol is flawed because there is no overall strategy or clarity between departmental responsibilities. In relation to alcohol the national alcohol agency, Alcohol Concern, argues for coherence between taxation and the price of alcohol; licensing of premises and people who sell alcohol; community safety, where drinking disorder would be designed out; control of the promotion of alcohol; promoting responsible drinking for all and enhancing the support and treatment available to those in the early stages of developing an alcohol problem. These should all be considered together and provide a framework for public policy (Alcohol Concern 1999). There are other groups, with a concern for the environment that would make a similar case regarding the lack of an overarching transport policy framed to sustain the environment, reduce fossil fuel use, noise pollution and also accidents. These are two very different views of the function of the state and the liberty or otherwise of individuals (see Adams 1995).

One of the implications of this study is that public policy has a central crucial role in developing many social norms relating to drink driving (Caetano and Clark 1998). Some such norms, in which public policy plays a creative part, allowed of some in

this study to relax in the belief that in no circumstances would they ever be guilty of drink driving. There is thus a necessity for all public policy to guide the beliefs, attitudes, values and norms that impact upon the behaviour that lead some people to drink driving and allow some to move in and out of a common value system (Matza and Sykes 1957). The direction of the remainder of this chapter will be to argue that, if drink driving is to reduce more, public policy must address the ways in which the beliefs, attitudes, values and social norms are developed in line with insights from studies where social norms have been changed (Perkins 2002) and be evidence based (Babor et al 2003).

The state seems not to assume responsibility for enabling citizens to understand the law in order that they can abide by it. This study charts the implications of that neglect for some participants (see chapters 9 and 10). This returns to the arguments that were in use when the legal limit was set at a relatively, in international terms, high level and those concerned for civil liberties argued that all needed to understand what the limit meant for them (see chapter 2). It is no surprise that, because of the uncertainty allowed then, many in this study had a lack of precise consideration about their drinking. Further it seems unwise, if not bizarre, that planning regulations require new or renovated public houses to provide car parks when this is not a requirement for restaurants (personal communication from the development director of a chain of public houses and restaurants). It is little wonder that the reaction of some was to see public policy as duplicitous, in allowing them some alcohol but to them an unclear amount, and so framed constructions that could not keep them law abiding.

The basis of much of the law and regulation of drink driving is based on the idea of deterrence. The sense in which deterrence shores up the law has been enumerated both in the reviews of UK policy, in chapter 2, and relevant theories, in chapter 4. The implications of the deterrence policy were widespread among the subjects of this study many of whom feared the consequences of offending (see chapter 7). As such it may well have been the trigger to a desire not to offend but the evidence (see Nichols and Ross's 1990, Voas et al 1997, Ross 1992, 1993, Yu and Williford 1995, Baum 1999, Benson et al 2000) seems clear that of itself deterrence has limited effect. I presume it is the underlying reason for a lack of alternative sentencing options that would educate or rehabilitate offenders and help to avoid further offences, until the DDR scheme became a national one in 2000. Another is the minimum driving disqualification of 12 months. So many other states have disqualification for much shorter periods and use curfews or partial disqualifications so that, for example, those convicted can drive to and from work but at no other time. The effect here on some individuals of a long disqualification is disproportionate to the seriousness of the offence that involved no accident and even no or little movement of the vehicle. Some in this study saw their ban as draconian in its impact. In general, if the majority of convicted drink drivers are, like this group, trying to be not drink drivers they need information, clear messages that support their desire rather harsh punishment after conviction.

The Department for Transport conducts twice yearly publicity campaigns imparting a 'do not drink and drive' message. These have led to a major change in general attitudes to the, now commonly held, social norm that drink driving is an anti-social action. Few UK drivers would doubt that conclusion. But these campaigns, in the constructions they show of drink drivers who are usually young, almost always involved in serious accidents and often drunk projects a norm of drink drivers that is partial. Some in this study (see chapter 7) excluded themselves from that category and the message. At least some messages that show middle aged or older people consuming smaller amounts of alcohol and driving short distances would be

inclusive. These campaigns and approaches to reduce offending need to be revised to take account of the factors indicated here, so that drivers do not exclude themselves from the message and construe themselves as anything but drink drivers. In general the message from this study is that such campaigns need to be planned by those who accept that the majority of drivers, of all ages, are not trying to be drink drivers but rather the reverse. Such drivers need to be helped by publicity campaigns.

One element of using public policy to create accurate social beliefs and norms for drinkers that accord with the realities described here would be to reduce confusing matters in the presentation of factual material about alcohol. One example relates to a standard drink. Most men in this group drank beer or lager and the measure they all considered was a pint. The standard measure used in public policy is the unit of alcohol. This equates to half a pint of beer or lager, at 3.5% ABV, so a usual pint is between 2 and 5 units. This is not well understood and many knew that 2-3 units might keep them under the legal limit but construed that message as 2-3 pints, (see chapter 5). Messages, such as these, entirely devoted to a measure of quantity and taking no account of the strengths of different drinks are inaccurate. Generally the men did not calculate alcohol strength within their drinking. They drank particular products because that was what they enjoyed and were habituated to not because the product had any particular alcohol strength. The lack of clarity the idea of a standard drink is a persistent problem (See Cooper 1999).

This study has shown that the quantity of alcohol consumed by individuals says little about them as drinkers, in chapter 5, and greater understanding will only come, for the drinkers who drive, through exploring the different drinking patterns and drinking styles any individual adopts. Further recognition that the majority of drinkers construe their drinking as predominately a social occasion for meeting with friends, family or acquaintances. As such it is a time for relaxation, leisure and pleasure and is simply accepted or rather is a 'not examined' or carefully considered activity. It happens. It is expressed by people as what they do. For the majority in this study these were the occasions when they offended. Public policy needs to address both these occasions, the constructions people have of them and the drinking patterns and styles they represent. One obvious step, recent governments have been reluctant to take, is to reduce the legal limit to the European 1988 recommendation of 50 mg of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood and to take the opportunity to provide a major education programme linking small amounts of alcohol to being unfit to drive.

It is impossible to offer precise guidance as to what level of alcohol consumption will equate to the legal limit. If such information is always omitted by public policy makers or is expressed in weekly totals of units of alcohol, it will not correct the confused constructions of drinkers, such as this group. Most defined their own consumption, whether as a modest, occasional or reasonably heavy drinker, by comparison with other drinkers. If companions are seen or known to drink more than the person is, by definition, a modest drinker. The only public messages that will have relevance to such ordinary drinkers as these drinkers are those that relate to drinking patterns. Thus they need to refer to specific examples, even in general terms, such as, 'those who drink more than 2 pints of standard strength on at least 3 occasions a week' or similar compositions. The fact that some government messages say, 'do not drink any alcohol and drive' is evidence for drivers that this is a difficult, doubtful area and when allied to a high legal limit shows the government is unsure of its message.

Drinking patterns have been identified in this study and that they are subject to change because social situations, relationships, employment or other lifestyle factors affect them and the pattern alters. Alterations in these matters may have a corresponding effect upon drinking style and this style bore no consistent relationship to the quantity consumed on any single occasion (see chapter 5). The key factor in drink driving is the amount of alcohol in the body when driving and this does not relate to any perceived norm or belief. Drinkers need to be assisted to understand that their drinking is unlikely to be consistent but to change from occasion to occasion and thus each drinking occasion is a challenge to being a non-drink driver and needs its own mechanism for maintaining that personal desire.

One of the regular ways by which drinking pattern and drinking style were changed was when situations took control over a person so that the mind was entirely occupied or some emotion filled the person (see chapter 8). A multiplicity of life's events was capable of having this effect upon people. Bad news, a sudden problem or anxiety can absorb any of us for a few hours until we have adjusted to the matter or determined how to deal with it. These may be the very things that lead someone to drinking alcohol when this would not normally be the case as when people go drinking in order to sort out some matter between them or when someone flees from a difficulty to go for a drink. Other situations may be longer lasting as with the death of a close relative or the breakdown of a relationship. The interviews became times when people accepted that they ceased then to function in any way that they recognised as themselves. They spoke in terms of not thinking straight, of being totally preoccupied, of not acting rationally or in similar terms. The usual implication drawn was that at the time they did not recognise that they were no longer acting rationally or in accord with their actual social identity (Goffman 1963). Such experiences usually affected the level of drinking, again often unrecognised, but it may be other aspects of the non-drink driving practice that is changed such as taking the car when going drinking or failing to leave it in the car park, as was the intention. If public policy is to recognise and adapt to these realities, for these are the constructions people have of their drinking, they require to be addressed with sophisticated messages if all drivers are to recognise all the occasions when they will be vulnerable to not maintaining their intent of not-drink driving. Such a message might ask people to consider, with examples, the circumstances in which drinking changes and offer reinforcement of the simple message that driving with any alcohol may be unsafe and may also bring people to the legal limit.

The matter is not different in relation to driving. Public messages need to help people to take account of travelling a short distance in any vehicle as driving just as much as any other journey, to appreciate that utility and convenience are the reasons these people drove, largely frames the driving (Goffman 1974) and recognise just how much, on the evidence presented here in chapter 6, driving is an intensely personal activity – so miles travelled per year or skill comparisons with other drivers were hardly considered. Whilst convenience largely marked out the driving undertaken it was not how these men construed themselves as drivers. That was the interest, satisfaction and esteem in owning a car and driving. Almost everyone considered himself to be a good, safe driver but, of course, had no measure of that other than lack of involvement in accidents or traffic incidents and observation of others. Yet driving is a highly skilled act and to licence people to be drivers after a limited test of ability, never to test for some driving experiences, nor to require a lifetime of learning and development or regularly provide evidence of capability are failures of public policy.

This study showed in chapter 8 that the majority of these drivers had developed personal rules to avoid becoming drink drivers. That and chapter 9 showed that

there are major ways in which the rules constructed by people did not operate at critical times. Either the rules were not safe, in the sense that they would protect from driving with alcohol in the body, because the man regularly drank more heavily than he construed and any reduction still left him vulnerable, or they were based on incomplete data, or the situation or the mood or state of mind or level of intoxication in which people found themselves set the rules aside. Also some people take risks (Adams 1995). It is thus almost inevitable that some people will offend even though they had no intention to do so. Public policy needs to address how these offenders are to be positively dealt with so that they are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes not to offend again. Courses, such as DDR, for them need to help people to discover the constructions on which they operate as drinkers and as drivers, the underlying beliefs, attitudes, values and norms, the rules they develop in order to avoid driving after drinking and the circumstances that set aside these personal rules. Courses need time to examine these, work with them and explore alternative actions and rules that will protect from drink driving. This means that all courses must span a period of weeks with sessions separated by some days.

One further and simple step for public policy would be to enable people to have a surer grasp of the legal limit in terms of alcohol consumed. It is no part of this study to examine the arguments for or to argue for a particular limit but the study has shown that people are confused, feel they have a right to accurate knowledge and, if they were clear, appear to indicate that, in their desire not to drink and drive, would have kept to such a limit. Other countries have reduced their legal limit to such a low figure that it is obvious to all that driving with any alcohol in the body is illegal. The next step would be to accept, against all the pressure from the alcohol industry, the European Council's stated objective of a 50 mg legal limit throughout Europe for this country (see p. 24). Not to set the limit that more reflects the reality of alcohol's effects is a disservice to drivers who are trying to remain non-drink drivers.

One group of drivers that are not easily addressed are those who do not consider the matter of drink driving at all. Yet the message from this study is that not all of these are determined drink drivers with strong links to a community of hardened criminals. There were four who acknowledged that, at some time, they had not really considered drink driving at all. This was so because, as with drinking patterns, the personal rules people developed were not always constant. They changed over time. They did not fit a common stereotype. This time of not thinking about drink driving may have been when being "young and foolish" one felt invincible; or because one is so wrapped in many activities that slipping to the pub at the end of the evening just happened as a normal part of life; or because one has been convicted once and eventually complacency sets in for it won't happen again. In addition there may be single occasions when the circumstances were such that the matter needed no thought as when the only driving was to park the car. More considered was the one man, whose few minutes' hard calculation had irrefutably shown that the mathematical odds are heavily against being caught or the other whose careful choice of the route home rendered further thought unnecessary. But from this study only a minority of about 10% felt that the risk of being stopped was so slight that it was not a matter worth bothering with and having come to that conclusion they remained constant in their behaviour.

The argument of this thesis is that the dynamic for many actions are the relevant constructions people hold and that, as these are socially constructed, public policy cannot be excluded from a central role in shaping those constructions. The legislators in 1806 had the safety of travellers as their prime objective. Modern policy makers surely do not wish to diminish that concern. But in the traffic

conditions that now apply, that old concern will not be realised without a great deal more clear input. That input should enable drivers who wish to be non drink drivers to achieve that desire on every occasion when they drive.

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APPENDIX 1 CHOOSING THE SAMPLE FOR THE PILOT STUDY

Briefly looking through the list of recorded scores for drinking at the start and end of the courses I saw that the numbers over 50 units a week seemed very sparse. There were many more showing 40+ and that seemed the more natural cut off point to take. Without searching through every scrap of information, especially for 1993 where it was less clearly recorded, I arrived at the following trawl:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Weekly drinking 40+ units</i>		<i>Weekly drinking 50+ units</i>	
1993-4	24	29.6%	13	14.4%
1994-5	22	24.2%	10	11.0%
1995-6	31	34.8%	12	13.5%

The figures were higher than I imagined. So I restricted my searching, for the pilot interviewees, to the 50+ units drinkers. Pragmatically, for this pilot study, it seemed sense to take one from each year of operation and broad age range, in order to examine the links between the drinking of younger men and middle-aged men and a drink driving offence. The pilot required that there be a mix between these age groups. But how to randomly choose from the above posed a neat question and in the end a simple practical approach, as the only way in which to meet both the above criteria, operated. In the 1994-5 year there were more young men under 30 yrs in the group of 50+ units of drinking so I chose 1 from there. 1 was a student and thus to some extent unrepresentative so I chose the other. The 1995-6 year had more men in the older age bracket of 55+ so I chose one of those, at 57 years, who proved not to be available because his letter was returned by the post office as 'gone away'. I turned to the other, although he was 63, but he refused to participate. I moved to the third choice. That left me a wide choice from the first year and as one of the heaviest drinkers altogether was 34 yrs old and I could not remember him in any way I chose him. These three people provided the interviews for the pilot study.

Each of the 3 selected people were written to on university headed notepaper, given an explanation of the research study and invited to participate. This was followed by a telephone call from me to clarify any points of uncertainty and to assuage any fears. They were assured of complete personal confidentiality with names and any personal identification features being excluded from any written material sent to the university. It was explained that the interview would take about 45 minutes, would be recorded on tape and could be held either in their home, if quiet could be provided, or in a private room in the city centre venue where the courses were held. No financial inducement was offered and no request made for assistance. Each agreed to be interviewed.

My first aim when undertaking this literature search was to bring myself up to date with the current literature across the whole field. Having worked in the alcohol field for a number of years I had some understanding of the material available but was anxious not to be constrained in my thinking by the inevitable partiality of my previous reading and experience. It seemed wise to begin with a search through the Sociological Abstracts for the past five years. It was also much less daunting than facing the current computer network technology! Although the material is divided into subject areas and there were many studies relating to use of alcohol and driving there appeared to be only a limited number directly relating to my current purposes. The Social Science Citation Index was also examined but found to be of modest use at this stage

Much greater usefulness was found in the Applied Social Science Index and Abstracts (ASSIA). The Index covers the majority of major international journals in applied sociology in the field. Subject headings are clear and interrelated and the publication was bound in annual volumes, which meant that the material was readily available and easy to search and to widen or narrow the search field according to interest. This material is now only available on the web. Therein lay the greatest danger, I found, for there was so much of interest that initially I found myself making notes about interesting material that is unlikely to be relevant to this project. It took considerable discipline to restrict myself to those matters that are central to my project and thus to narrow the field of search.

My second method was to use the material on MEDLINE, which had the merit of being relatively easily accessible and gave an introduction into the use of computer technology. I found it easy to quickly search through recent material and to narrow the scope of the search to matters that are central to my work. A further advantage was that it was relatively easy to download the results of the search to a floppy disc and then, in much better working conditions, to look at the material, discard that which I did not need and print out any material that was useful for my purposes. The major disadvantage, for me, of this data set is that searches reveal material that has the most tenuous link with my subject area. Many of the studies reviewed and cited are highly technical, epidemiological work about, for example, the effect of alcohol on the liver, reported at length and the only reason the search brought it forward is because there is a possible link to drink driving. However, MEDLINE has produced some valuable material for this project and the previous disadvantages are outweighed by its ease and simplicity of access and use.

Finally, use has also been made of the ISI file of the Bath Information Data Set (BIDS) later to become the Web of Science. Access initially proved difficult but later improved. The coverage is quite comprehensive and the information given seems to be better prepared than that on MEDLINE. Conclusions from the reviewed material are generally given and there is a surer feel that the original material has been deftly and accurately summarised and recorded. I had a greater confidence that, in this source, I was able to apprehend the work originally undertaken.

There were two disadvantages to the above method in that notes have to be made of the references that are useful or need to be followed up. This is time consuming and my notes were not always as clear and self-explanatory subsequently as when they were made. The further disadvantage was the differential value and style of the abstracts. Some abstracts give the purpose of the study under consideration,

indicate something of its methodology and conclusions. Others were much less forthcoming omitting either the conclusions of the study or were sparing in the information about the methodology used. In these cases I found it difficult to be certain whether I needed to follow up the reference or not. There are also a number of cases where the only reference is the title and author, which is flimsy evidence on which to make a decision as to its value to one's purpose. Clearly, following up a number of these only to discover that the material has no bearing on my study was a further waste of time.

The contents of the university library are extremely limited in relation to my subject area of drink driving and the only journal taken in the alcohol field is 'Addiction' the major British journal, though it does have considerable material from Europe, Australia and America. As a personal member of the society the library is only of use to me in providing copies of the journal prior to my own membership. Apart from material connected directly to my subject area the library has provided many other basic texts on the wider nature of sociological enquiry and the philosophical grounds on which such enquiry stands.

APPENDIX 3 DRINKING PATTERNS OF THE SAMPLE

The references in the table below are to:

- Daily, 2-3 times or 4-5 times per week
- When aged 16-17, 17-18, 18-20 years
- Late evening or 10 pm drinking - often when any activity is finished

As the descriptive columns are totally exclusive the vertical and horizontal totals do not agree. The totals of the vertical columns show the incidence of that type of pattern. The total of the horizontal columns show the total number of patterns described by the individual concerned.

Table 4. References to Drinking Patterns by subjects.

	<i>W/e</i>	<i>Evening</i>	<i>Day Time</i>	<i>From Work</i>	<i>Not out for</i>	<i>On Job</i>	<i>Occasional</i>	<i>Abstain</i>	<i>Total</i>
Andy		2-3			Sun. Pm				2
Brian	Yes	Daily				Daily	Parties		4
Colin		2-3 with Band		Yes		Band (2-3)			2
Dave		Daily	Occas	Yes		Insur. Sales			4
Eric	17-18		Half days	Daily					3
Frank		Daily	Day off			Never			2
Guy	Yes	Daily	No	Yes	Sun. Lunch	Never			5
Harry	17-18	1 and 3-4	No			Yes - DJ	Yes		4
Ian		Daily	No	Yes					2
Jim		Daily	Occas	Yes					3
Ken	Yes	3-4	W/e						3
Leo		1-2	After work	Yes	If see friends		Until 2yrs ago		5
Mick		Daily	After work	Yes		To find business	Yes		5
Nigel	Last 15 yrs	1 per wk	Fri	Fri				U/E	5
Owen	18-20	Daily	Regular	Yes		4 times a year			5
Paul	17-18	Daily	Regular	Yes					4
Phil	Yes	Daily	Lunch	Reg		Ins. Sales			5
Ray	17-18	When divorced	No	1 x 2 weeks	Yes	Worked in Nightclub	Parties		6
Sid	4-5		Teens	Teens					3
Tom	16-17	1+Sun							2

	<i>W/e</i>	<i>Evening</i>	<i>Day Time</i>	<i>From Work</i>	<i>Not out for</i>	<i>On Job</i>	<i>Occasional</i>	<i>Abstain</i>	<i>Total</i>
Vince	Yes	Daily		2-3					3
Will		Daily		Yes				Yes	3
Alex	Friday	Friday							1
Bill	17-18 Friday	10 pm		Some		Occasional			4
Clive	17-18/ Army			Aft.shift	If see friends		Irregular		5
Dick	20-21/ married	3-4	No						3
Ed	17-18 Friday		No				Yes		2
Fred	16-17/ Adult	At Home					Occasional	2 yrs	4
Giles		4-5	Afts						2
Huw	16 Frid/ Adult		W/e	No	Some				4
Ivor	17-18	Daily/ 1	Sat.	Reg		No	Special Occasions		6
Joe		2-3					Off Licence		2
Keith	Yes	2- 3/More	No	Never			Funeral		4
Len	Yes	4-5	2 pint	Never			In Navy	Yes	5
Mark	Now - only	Was daily	W/E	Never					3
Neil	17-18	Daily/1	Rare				Parties when young		5
Otto	Yes	1-2	Rare		Yes			1 yr	5
Pat		4-5/2	Occas	Never	Occas				4
Roy	18-19	Home		Rare		Barman p/t	Specials		5
Sam	Teens					Campsite		2 yrs	3
Tony	Yes		1 pint						2
Vic	Yes	Daily	No	Yes					4
Walt	Sats	1	No				Yes		3
Alan		1-2/4-5	Fri.	No		Fri			3
Ben		Daily	Yes			Yes			2
Chris		Daily - home	Occas	Shifts				To 38	4
Dan	Teen	Daily	Hols	Yes					4
Gary	Teens	Daily	Yes	Yes		Broker			5
Jack	Teens	Daily	When u/e						3
									177
Totals	37	48	27	24	8	16	15	7	

APPENDIX 4 ALCOHOL KNOWLEDGE QUIZ (MILLS 1991 APPENDIX F)

For each question there is a choice of answers, A B C D or E. Please read each question carefully, decide which is the correct answer and then write the letter in the box on the right hand side.

If you do not know any answer, do not guess, put the letter E in the box.

1. Alcohol travels in the body by:

- A the blood
- B the nervous system
- C the urine
- D the digestive juices
- E don't know

2. Once inside the body alcohol effects –

- A the bladder
- B the brain
- C the stomach
- D all parts of the body
- E don't know

3. Which contains more alcohol –

- A half a pint of beer
- B half pint cider
- C glass of wine
- D a pub measure of gin and tonic
- E don't know
- F all contain the same

4. "One unit" is the amount of alcohol in –

- A half a pint of beer
- B double whisky
- C 1 pint of lager
- E don't know

5. If you have two glasses of wine with a meal, followed by 1½ pints of bitter and then a large whisky at the pub, how many units of alcohol will you have consumed?

- A 5
- B 7
- C 8
- E don't know

6. If A heavy drinker and an occasional drinker both drank three pints of ordinary beer, which answer would be correct –

- A the heavy drinker would be less affected
- B the heavy drinker would be more affected
- C they would be equally affected but the occasional drinker would seem more drunk
- D they would be equally affected but the heavy drinker would seem more drunk
- E don't know