


# **“The quick and the dead.” A history of the pedestrian**

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Barbara Schmucki, University of York

TOWARDS CARFREE CITIES IX  
28 June - 1 July 2010, York, UK



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“There are two classes of pedestrians in these days of reckless motor-traffic: the quick and the dead.”

Lord Dewar 1864-1930

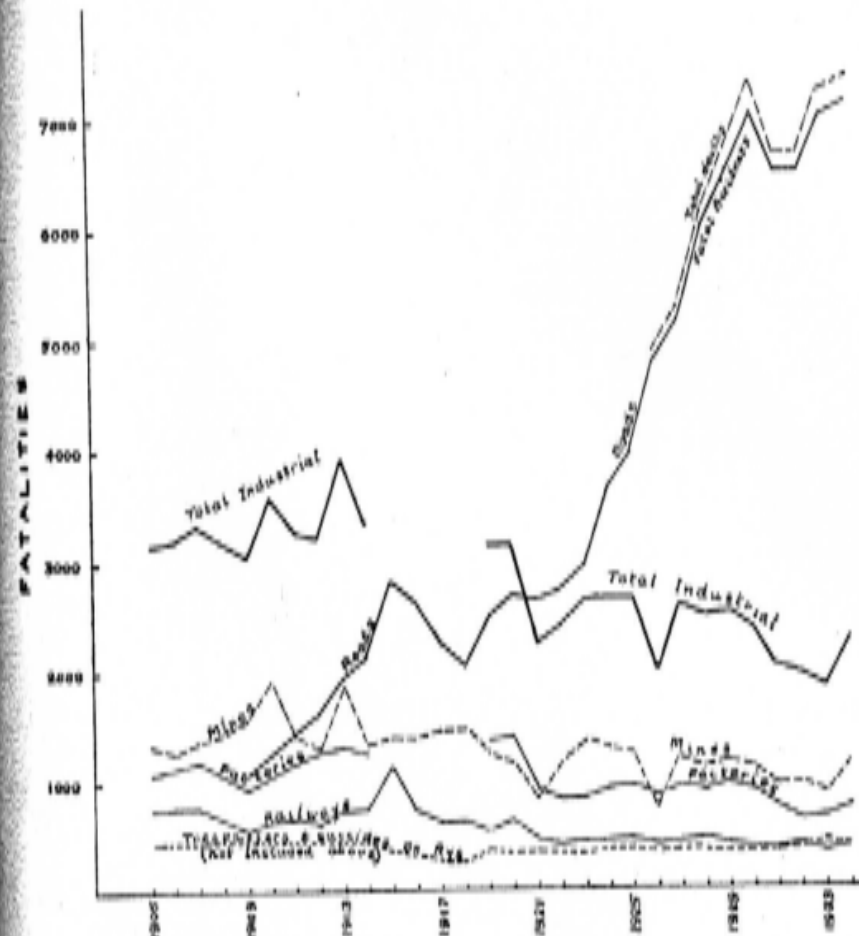
‘Knockout tournament. Jeremy Bugler on official attitudes to the vulnerable pedestrian’, *The Guardian*, Mar 8, 1976, p. 14.

# Fatal Accidents

## Britain 1905-1934

### FATAL ACCIDENTS On roads, railways and in mines and factories 1905 — 1934

- Note (1) The curve for total industrial accidents is the sum of the railway, factory and mine curves.  
(2) Statistics of Factory accidents were not published between 1914 and 1919.  
(3) Road casualties were first published in 1909.



The graph has been contributed by Mr. H. G. Buxton.



# Structure of this paper

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- Changes of walking environments
- Discourses of pedestrians' safety
- Experience of safety and walking behaviour

## Karlsplatz, Munich, Germany 1913



## Karlsplatz, Munich, Germany 1925



Karlsplatz, Munich,  
Germany 1952

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München, Karlsplatzrondell bei Nacht

# Karlsplatz, Munich, Germany 1963





Karlsplatz, Munich, Germany 1983



[Poster No. 5.]



### "TIPS" AND "CUES" FOR PEDESTRIANS.

An accurately turned Billiard Ball will always

# Look Round

S  
A  
F  
E  
T  
Y  
F  
I  
R  
S  
T

- Don't turn your back to the traffic when crossing a street. Face it, and.
- Don't dodge behind the vehicle from which you have just alighted. Make first for the curb, and—
- Don't dart straight across a road, but let your course be "V" shaped. Face first to the right, then to the left. By this method, the traffic is always faced. At the same time—
- Don't fail to use refuges wherever available. These are found at most busy crossing places, and justify an estimate of your journey to use them. In any case—
- Don't cross a street at a point where a side street intersects. Make sure you are safe from the traffic in both main and side streets, and, especially, like the Billiard Ball.
- Don't attempt to squeeze your way through a block in the traffic. The vehicles may commence to move, and you would face the risk of being crushed. Always—
- Don't omit to keep a sharp look-out for on-coming traffic. Before stepping off the curb—
- Don't fail to take special care at night time. Cross near a lamp. Collect your thoughts, and—
- Don't attempt to board, or alight from, a vehicle until you are certain the road is clear. Steady your nerves, adjust your parcels, and—
- Don't neglect to look both ways before crossing a road. in either direction—
- Don't fail to warn other pedestrians who may be walking into danger. They may be short-sighted, deaf, or absent-minded. Signal to them to—
- Don't forget that an essential principle of "Safety First" is to

L  
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K  
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N  
D

# Look Round

Printed by the London Safety First Council at Westminster, S.W. 1.

Printed by the London Safety First Council at Westminster, S.W. 1.

[Poster No. 6.]



## DON'TS FOR CYCLISTS

SINCE the War began, more than 110 cyclists have been killed and 1,700 injured in the streets of the Metropolitan area. It is believed that a number of these accidents were avoidable, and an appeal is made to all cyclists to exercise every care whilst riding in the streets. The following suggestions will, if acted upon, tend to reduce the number of accidents, fatal and otherwise:—

#### DON'T HOLD ON TO OTHER VEHICLES

It is only asking for trouble. It is an offence punishable by fine, or other penalty to be treated by motor vehicles. (Illustration No. 1)

#### DON'T TURN INTO MAIN ROADS AT A HIGH SPEED

Have your machine well under control at such points, and ring your bell.



#### DON'T FORGET THAT "SIDESLIPS" MAY OCCUR ON GREASY ROADS

A proper saddle adjustment is a real precaution. When roads are wet, or greasy, bridle about the seat with the intention to prevent side-slips. Ride slowly and avoid sudden turns. (Illustration No. 3)

#### DON'T NEGLECT TO PRACTISE EMERGENCY DISMOUNTS

The main rule: "Throw yourself off at the back, retaining a hold on the saddle." It is really required. (Illustration No. 4)

#### DON'T PASS OVERTAKEN TRAFFIC—EXCEPTING TRAMCARS—ON THE NEAR SIDE

The regulation is frequently not so clear as "overtaking" you on the left.



#### DON'T FAIL TO GIVE WARNING WHEN APPROACHING SIDE-STREETS

Always ring your bell and indicate your intention of turning down side streets by raising the right or left arm to show a right or left turn.

#### DON'T FAIL TO CROSS TRAM LINES AS "SQUARELY" AS POSSIBLE

Avoid sharp oblique approaches. (Illustration No. 5)

#### DON'T FAIL TO TAKE THE PROPER "SWEEP" WHEN TURNING CORNERS TO THE RIGHT AND "HUG" THE CORNERS WHEN TURNING TO THE LEFT

Clearance the side of the road. (Illustration No. 6)



#### DON'T START OUT WITHOUT TESTING ALL SHAKE GEAR OR WITHOUT FRONT AND REAR LAMPS TRIMMED

Make checks and tests before starting, and lamps are a necessary precaution for your own safety and the safety of others, in case you are obliged to stop and wait after a start.

#### DON'T NEGLECT YOUR TIRES

A tight chain may bring you down.



#### DON'T FAIL TO SECURE ALL LOOSE CLOTHING AND ANY LUGGAGE ON THE CARRIER

Many accidents are caused by loose caps, hats and things getting "upright up" and by loose mailbags, cases and parcels, trailing in the back wheel. Ladies are advised to tie their handkerchiefs and scarves and to pad their coats. (Illustration No. 7)

Illustration No. 1: Don't hold on to other vehicles.

Illustration No. 2: Don't turn into main roads at high speed.

Illustration No. 3: Don't forget that "sideslips" may occur on greasy roads.

Illustration No. 4: Don't neglect to practise emergency dismounts.

Illustration No. 5: Don't fail to give warning when approaching side streets.

Illustration No. 6: Don't fail to cross tram lines as "squarely" as possible.

Illustration No. 7: Don't fail to secure all loose clothing and any luggage on the carrier.

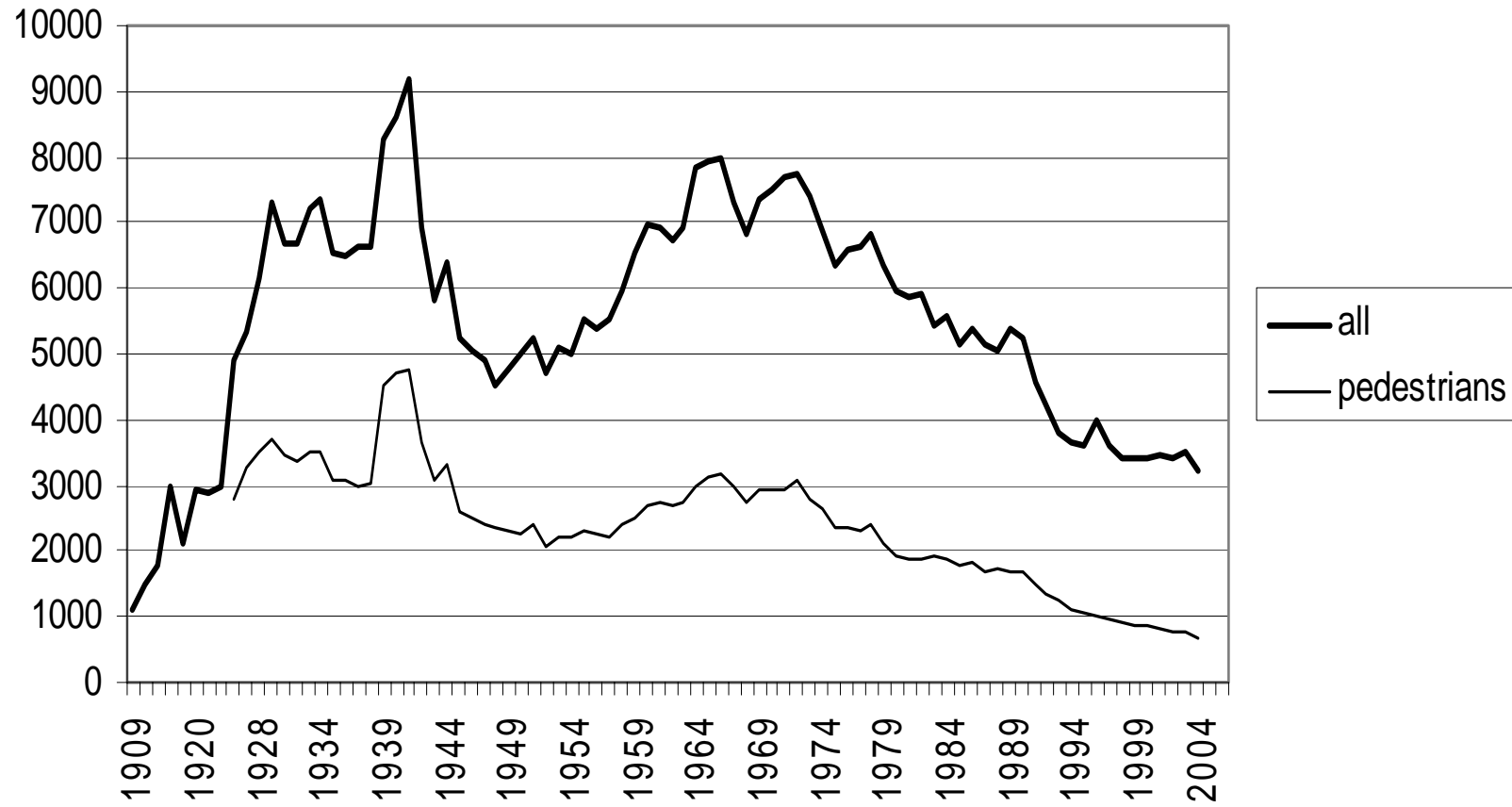
## TO ALL ROAD USERS—SAFETY FIRST

Issued by the London "Safety First" Council. Practical suggestions for the prevention of traffic accidents are invited, and should be forwarded to the Hon. Secretaries, London "Safety First" Council, 31, Westminster Broadway, S.W. 1, from whom may be obtained copies of Posters Nos. 1 and 2, in which are set forth the Rules of the Road, Hand Signals for Drivers, etc.

Illustration No. 7: Don't fail to secure all loose clothing and any luggage on the carrier.

1917

## Fatal Accidents in Britain 1909-2004

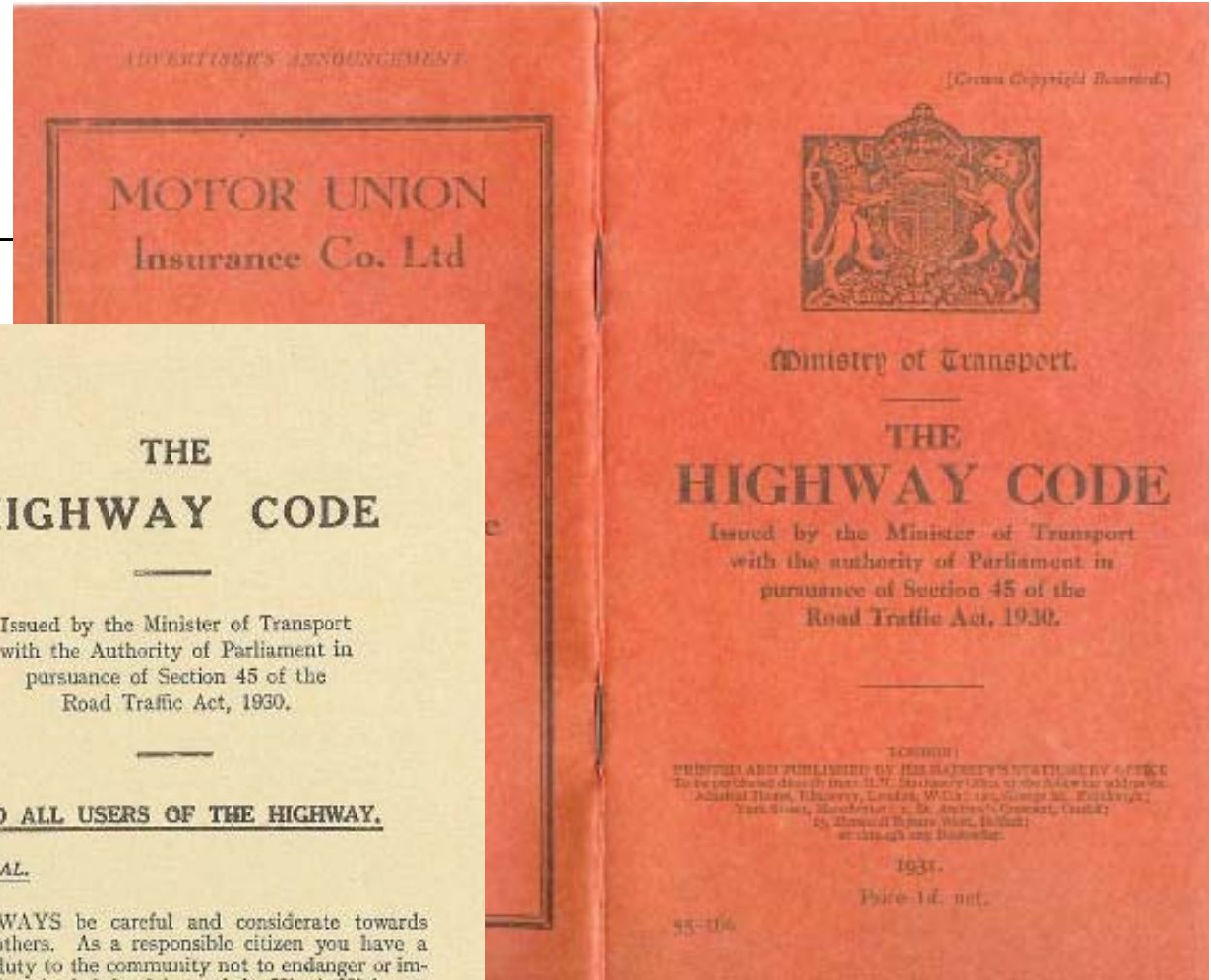


# Belisha-beacon crossing 1934

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1931



## THE HIGHWAY CODE.

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### TRAFFIC SIGNALS.

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## THE HIGHWAY CODE

Issued by the Minister of Transport  
with the Authority of Parliament in  
pursuance of Section 45 of the  
Road Traffic Act, 1930.

### TO ALL USERS OF THE HIGHWAY.

#### GENERAL.

**A**LWAYS be careful and considerate towards others. As a responsible citizen you have a duty to the community not to endanger or impede others in their lawful use of the King's Highway.

**Remember** that all persons—pedestrians, cyclists, persons leading, riding or driving animals and the drivers of motor or horse-drawn vehicles—have a right to use the highway and an obligation to respect the rights of others. Good manners and consideration for others are as desirable and are as much appreciated on the road as elsewhere.

Bear in mind the difficulties of others and try not to add to them.

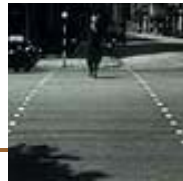
# Brixton police out to prevent accidents

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1939, Brixton Free Press, August 11.

# Pedestrian Crossing



**Director:** Michael Law

**Duration:** 2min 15sec

**Release Date:** 1948

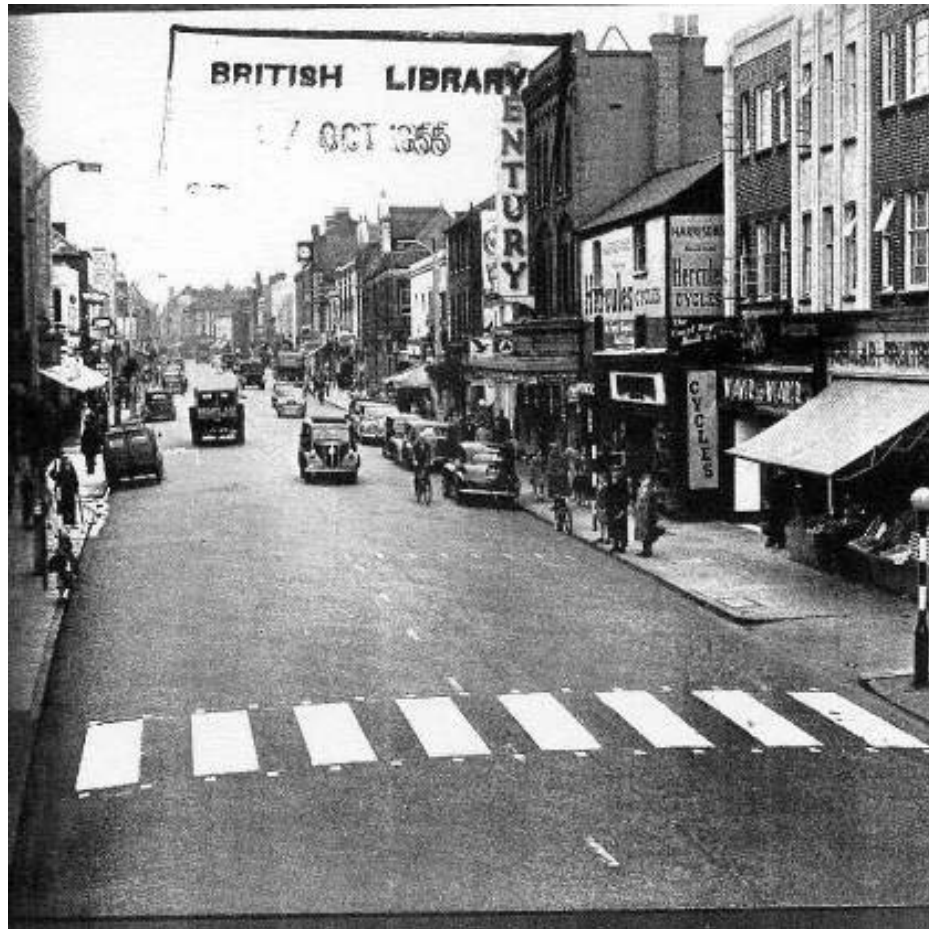
**Sponsor:** Central Office of Information for Ministry of Transport

**Synopsis:** Humorous road safety trailer on the correct use of pedestrian crossings

[http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/films/1945to1951/filmpage\\_pc.htm](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/films/1945to1951/filmpage_pc.htm)

# Zebra crossing 1951

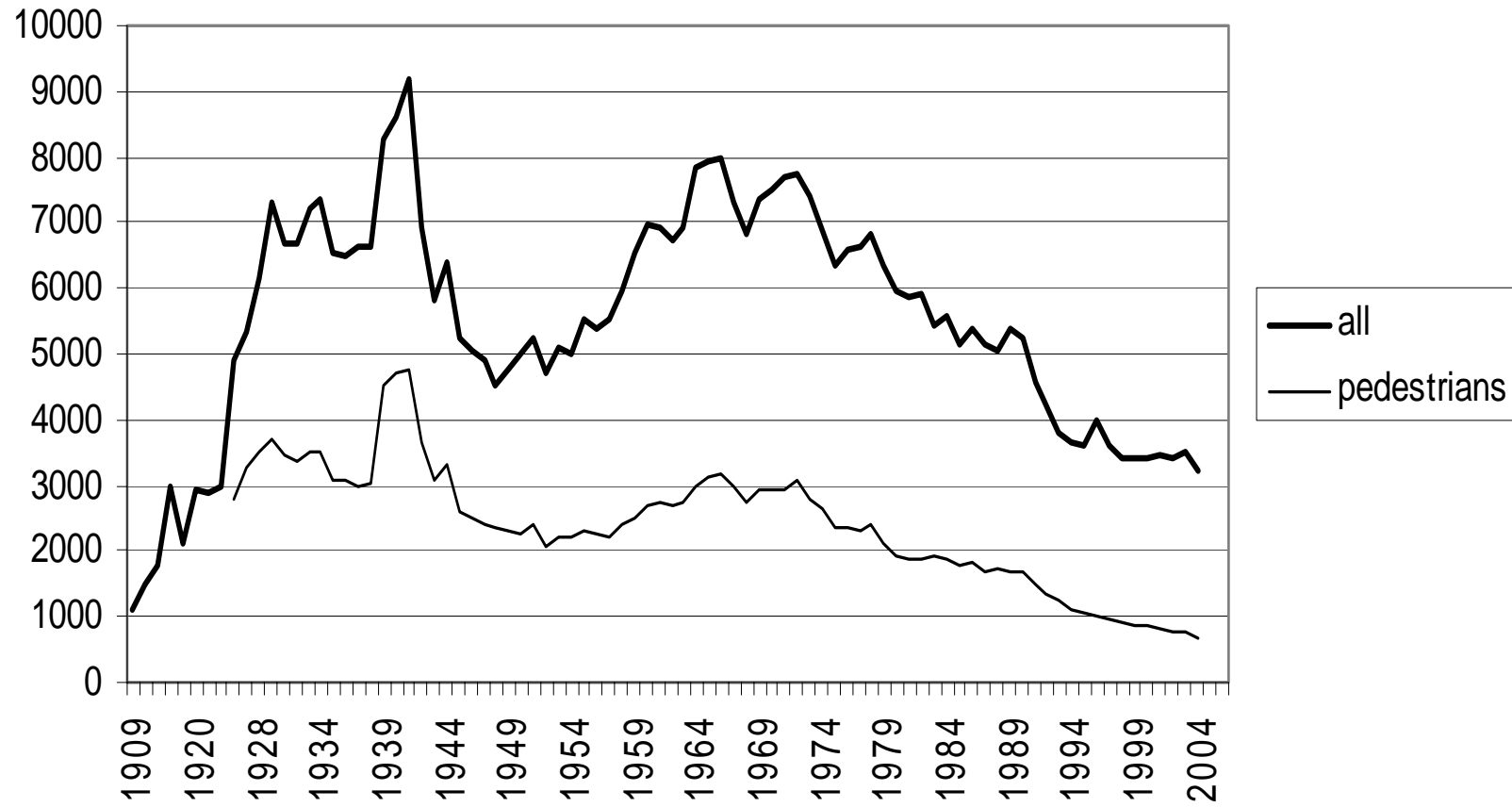
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The Pedestrian no. 18 (Autumn 1955), front.

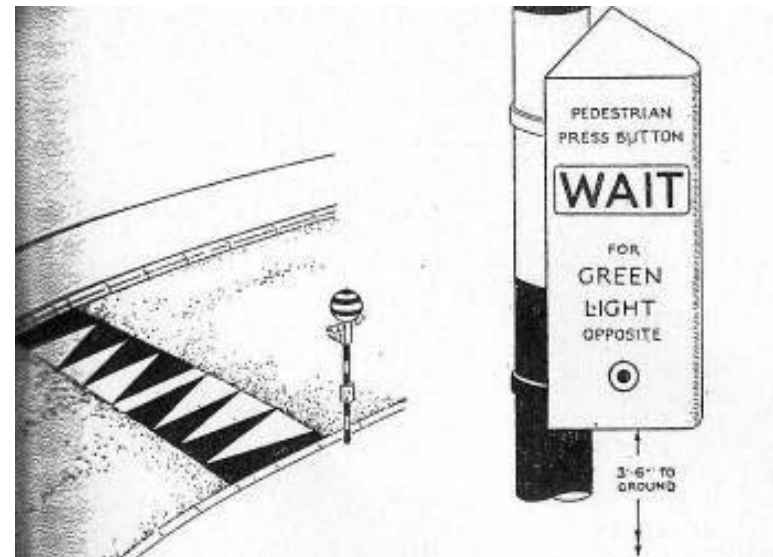


## Fatal Accidents in Britain 1909-2004



# Traffic light experiments

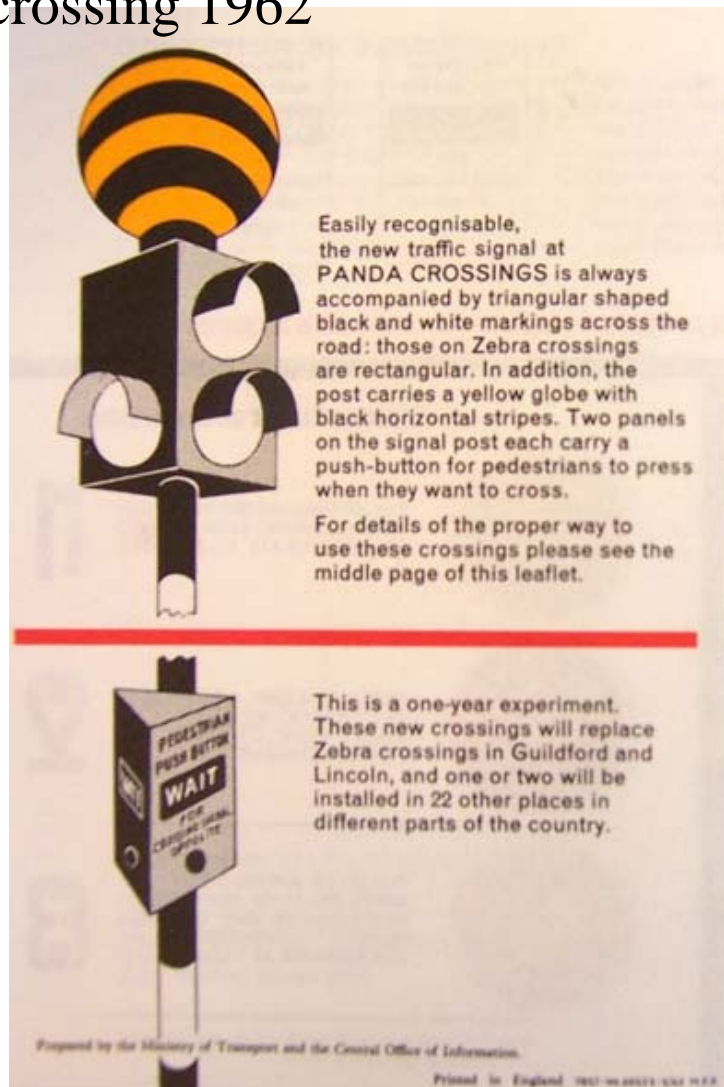
Pedestrian-operated flashing beacons  
1956



The Pedestrian no. 20 (Spring 1956), 19;  
The Pedestrian no. 30 (Autumn 1938), 19.

# Traffic light experiments

## Panda crossing 1962



“The first panda crossing outside Waterloo station caused confusion “  
BBC, 2 April 1962.



# Traffic light experiments

1963



1967

1955-1965

and cross in safety!

No matter how busy the street, and how dense the traffic, freedom for pedestrians to cross can easily be obtained, without undue interference to the traffic, by the use of Electro-matic pedestrian-controlled signals. These signals give normal right-of-way to road traffic, but operate in favour of pedestrians on the pressing of a button and ensure a fair allocation of the use of the road between both traffic and pedestrians. They are clearly a great contribution to road safety.

wherever you turn

**ELECTRO-MATIC**  
SIGNALS

make the highways safer

**AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE & ELECTRIC CO. LTD.**  
Savoy House, Arundel Street, London, W.C.2. Telephone: T E Mple Bar 4106.  
Telegrams: Savoyger Strand London. Savoyger Works, Liverpool 2.

Watch out for YOUR signal

## X-ways

New Push-Button Pedestrian Crossings

PEDESTRIANS			DRIVERS			
Wait drivers have priority	Cross vehicles are stopped	Cross with care drivers to give way	Proceed drivers have priority	Stop unless unsafe to do so	Stop pedestrians are crossing	Give way pedestrians have priority

Issued by H.M. Government.

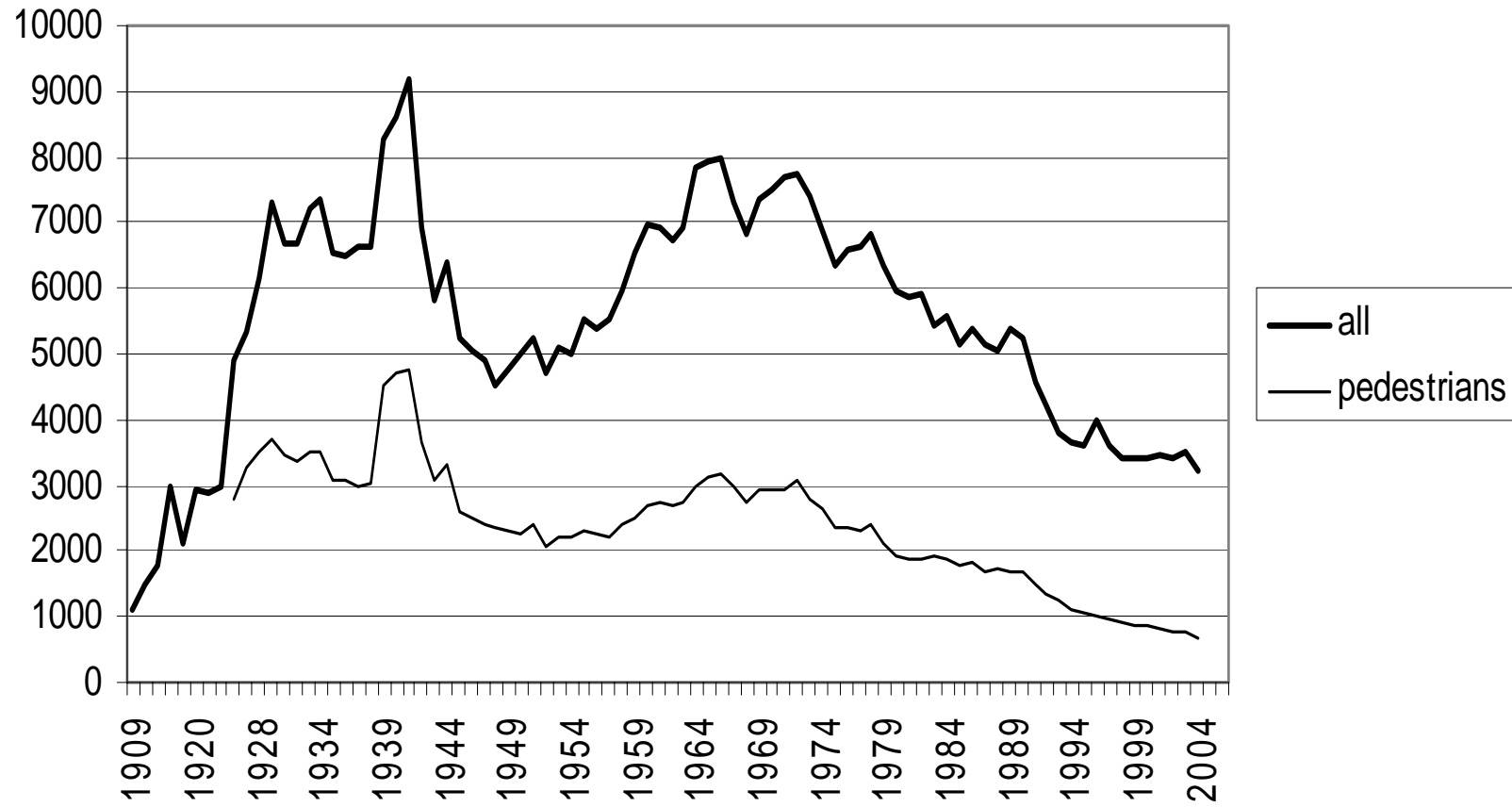
# Pelican crossing 1968

(PEdestrian LIght CONtrolled)

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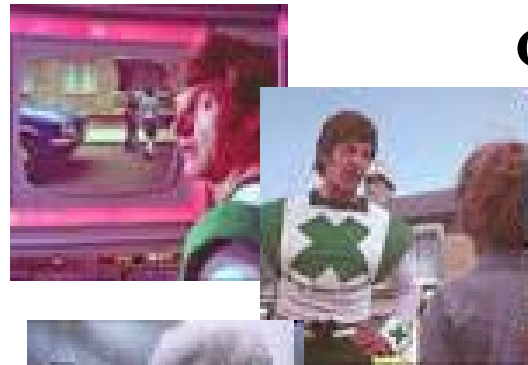


## Fatal Accidents in Britain 1909-2004



# Green Cross Code campaign 1971-

## Television adverts



## Green Cross man



## Green Cross Code



## SPLINK

(Find a) **S**afe (place to cross)

(Stand on the) **P**avement near the kerb

**L**ook (for traffic)

**I**f (traffic is coming, let it pass)

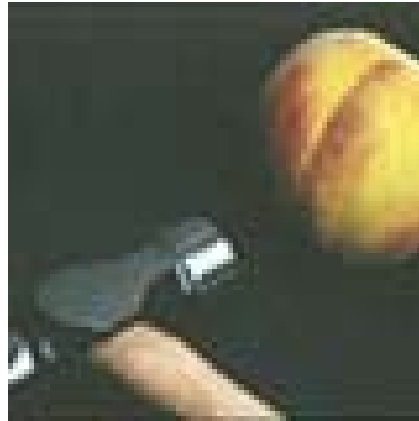
(When there is) **N**o (traffic near, walk across the road)

**K**eep (looking and listening for traffic as you cross).



# „You can't argue with a car“

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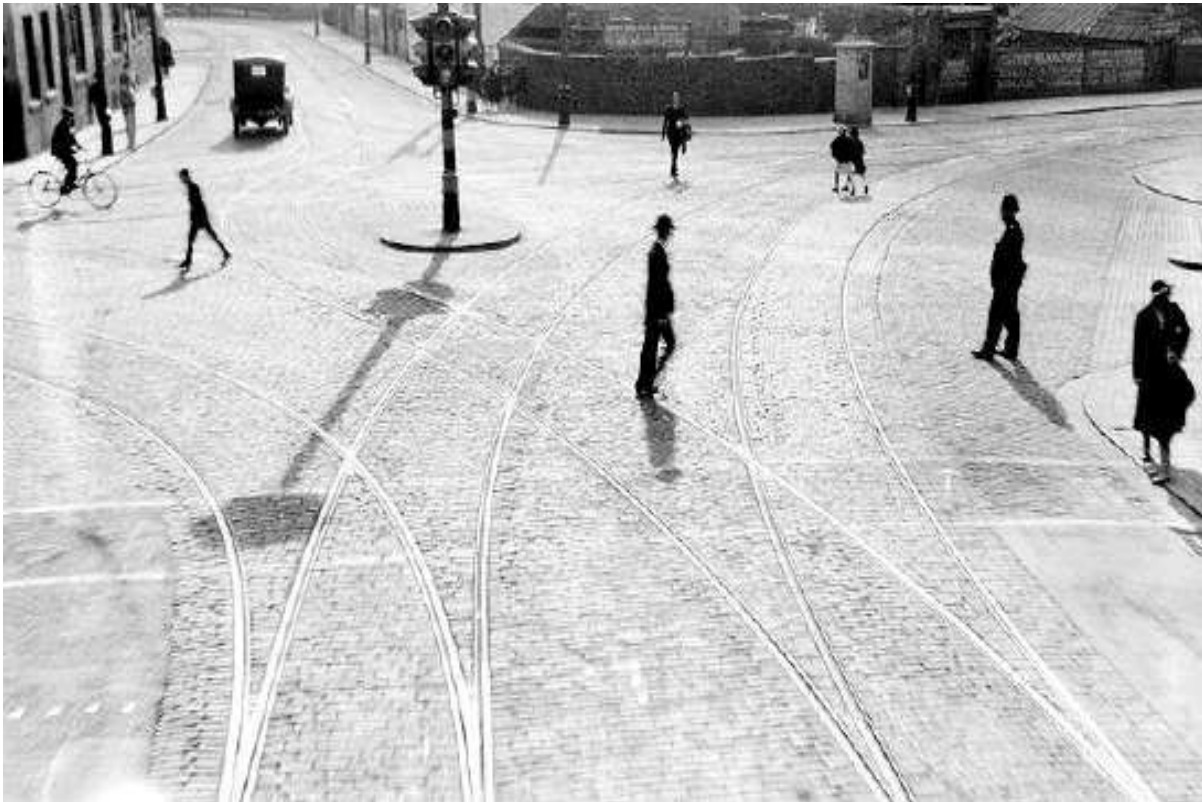


The National Archives, Public Information Films  
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/films/>



# South Shields, Chichester Junction

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1930s

National Tramway Museum, photographic collection.

# Sheffield Fitzalan Square today

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# Conclusion

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- pedestrians → broader cultural context of walking  
→ neglected element to the history of mass motorization
- pedestrians → little access to law, minimal influence over decisions  
→ both walkers and car users (more interest in car-use?)
- pedestrians → more often took the quicker route than the safer one

Moving freely became increasingly limited.