

All of the Law: All of the Time

By Mike Trippitt

Three years since first raising it in his Suggestives column Mike Trippitt is still on a mission ... and still ranting.

Here's a music hall joke for you: "What's the difference between a shoplifter, a burglar and a motorist who parks on double yellow lines?"

Well actually it is not a musical hall joke. It's no joke at all.

Almost weekly, I read letters in the local press about parking charges in our town. For its size, St Ives has great parking: three council-run pay-and-displays at The Globe, The Cattle Market and Darwood Court, the huge private enterprise car park at The Dolphin, the vast free park-and-ride in Meadow Lane, free parking along most of Bridge Street south of the river, and the bays in Market Hill and Broadway.

So why then are our double yellow lines littered with vehicles parked illegally?

This summer I was driving up Priory Road towards the junction with Market Hill and Station Road (*Tom's Cakes* crossroads). The road was blocked by a van and a car on double yellow lines on my nearside, and by a lorry on double yellows on my offside. I had to turn around, drive back down New Road and emerge onto Station Road near Waitrose.

None of the offending vehicles' drivers were present in Priory Road, but you can imagine what the conversation might have been.

Me: "Excuse me. You're parked illegally. Why?"

Van driver: "I choose to break the law because it is cheaper to do so than pay for parking."

Car driver: "I have a right to break the law because I'm too lazy to walk from the car parks."

Lorry driver: "I am entitled to break the law and block the road because I am making deliveries."

Onlooker: "They all parked illegally because they know the chances of getting caught are almost nil."

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Most people who break the law, be they shoplifter, burglar, or motorist do so because it is to their advantage: it makes or saves money, it saves time or effort, it advances self-interest.

Not all misdemeanours are equally serious. Of course, parking on double yellow lines is not as serious as theft or house breaking, but the fact remains, it is illegal.

Double yellow lines are strategically placed on our streets for the good of us all: to assist the flow of traffic, to prevent obstructions or nuisance, and to remove potential dangers to pedestrians and other road users. Imagine the consequences of a child being hit due to the restricted visibility caused by an illegally parked car, or a death because an emergency vehicle could not pass by an obstruction. Lines are there for a reason.

Some will be offended by the calling out of illegal parking as law breaking and the likening of it to crimes of dishonesty. But when we seek the protection of the law, and demand its enforcement, should we not comply with it too?

As one man in an elevated position learned recently, all of the law should be obeyed, all of the time.

Mindbenders
Can you find the hidden phrases?

busine

Cobalt
Prussian + A, B
Royal AB, O

HOLDS

Mindbenders solution: on page 30