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10

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1 in 20 drivers ask pals to take points

THOUSANDS of drivers admit they have paid someone to take their penalty points or been asked to take the punishment for a friend or relative.

Five per cent paid another driver to accept the blemish on their licence while six per cent were asked to do so by someone they know.

The research echoes the case of former Cabinet Minister Chris Huhne and his ex-wife Vicky Pryce. They were jailed in 2013 for perverting the course of justice when she took the rap for his speeding.

Those who trade points are more likely to be aged up to 24 and nearly three-fifths have done so three times or more. Culprits aim to avoid a ban or keep a clean licence, often to keep their job.

But only half who cheated the system were caught. Nearly three-quarters would take their partner's punishment and nearly two-fifths their children's.

A tenth are unaware it is illegal to do this, according to figures from a freedom of information request by price comparison website Confused.com.

Gemma Stanbury, head of motor insurance, said avoiding penalties allows offenders 'to remain on the roads where they may pose a risk to others'.

Currently 2.9million motorists have penalty points with 70,158 on nine points, three off a possible ban. The most common offence is speeding.

The 20-ton humpback that's making waves



A 20-ton humpback whale appears to be waving with its fins as it leaps from the Pacific Ocean during its migration along the coast of Mexico

Skin test could help diagnose dementia

A SKIN test could help detect Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, a study has suggested.

Doctors studied 53 volunteers with forms of dementia to analyse skin samples for differing amounts of certain proteins compared with 12 healthy people.

Skin biopsies from those with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's had higher levels of the protein phospho-tau compared with healthy people, while Parkinson's sufferers also had higher levels of alpha-synuclein protein.

There is no definitive diagnostic test for dementia, which affects more than 850,000 people in the UK. But the researchers from the Central Hospital at the University of San Luis Potosi, Mexico, said the preliminary results mean skin could be a useful way of detecting both diseases. Alzheimer's experts said the research would need to be repeated in larger groups.

Nelson's victory gift: a teapot from France

IF HE had known, Horatio Nelson would probably have choked on his tea.

Experts have discovered that a decorative teapot he used at the height of the Napoleonic Wars was French porcelain.

The 6in high piece, pictured, was part of a service known as the Baltic tea set presented to Admiral Lord Nelson to mark his victory at the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801. Experts who have examined it say he would have been unaware it was French.

The teapot, whose owner wishes to remain anonymous, is expected to fetch around £20,000 when it is auctioned by Bonhams in London on April 1.

