

**Client:** University of Exeter  
**Source:** Daily Express (Main)  
**Date:** 20 December 2007  
**Page:** 4  
**Circulation:** 789638  
**Size:** 263cm2  
**AVE:** 8731.6

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# Gridlock Britain with 27MILLION in planes, trains and automobiles

By **Polly Buchanan**

**MOTORISTS** were told to be prepared for road chaos tomorrow as 20 million drivers begin their Christmas getaway.

More than half of the cars in Britain will clog up our roads as part of a stampede that will see at least 27 million people head off for a festive holiday.

Four million people will take the train tomorrow – a million more than on a typical weekday.

And road traffic will hit a peak at 3pm as office workers begin their holidays early. Hot spots will include the M1, M4, M6, M8, M25, M60 and M62.

"There's definitely going to be chaos on the roads as so many different types of road users get in their cars," said an RAC spokesman.

"We advise those driving to the shops tomorrow to think about the time they go, and to use park-and-ride services to get into city centres if they can."

The predicted chaos is despite high fuel prices which the RAC Foundation said might put some motorists off travelling.

Almost two thirds of major roadworks on motorways and

major A roads will be completed

or suspended by 6am tomorrow to ease congestion, the Highways Agency announced last night.

But 36 schemes will remain in place for safety reasons. These include works on the M1, M3, M4, M6, M11, M25, M48 and M57.

Traffic jams will continue well into next week with four million cars expected on the roads on Christmas Day, and 16 million driving on December 27 and 28.

December 27 and January 2 are expected to be the busiest days for breakdowns.

More than three million will attempt to avoid the jams by jetting off for Christmas – with 1.2 million flying from Heathrow and 600,000 from Gatwick.

The favourite destinations are the Canary Islands, Florida, Paris and New York.

P&O ferries predicted it will carry in excess of 100,000 people from Dover to Calais this holiday weekend, though their estimate did not take into account people turning up to travel on the day.

As the festive rush gets under way, Dr G'bor Orosz, of the University of Exeter, said a driver braking too hard can lead to traffic grinding to a halt and massive tailbacks.

Academics there say they have

discovered jams with no visible cause are the result of a single driver slamming on the anchors.

**'There's definitely going to be chaos'**