

This document is intended for several different reader / groups so some of it may not be entirely relevant to some readers

**As being reminded of some accidents will upset relatives of the bereaved this information must not be discussed in public nor disclosed to the press.**

This is a list of the vehicle accidents and incidents that have occurred in Kirkby Stephen since about the time of the bypass public enquiry. As far as I know it includes all the fatalities that have occurred within the length that would have been bypassed. There will be many minor collisions that are not listed as I am not aware of them. Most if not all these accidents would not have occurred had a bypass been built.

See also public enquiry evidence (PDF) about this being a stretch of road with a high accident rate. Over the past few years the number of serious injuries seems to have decreased but this is probably due to improved vehicle safety cell integrity, ABS brakes and improved occupant restraint systems, not a reduction in accident frequency. The vast majority , possibly all of these accidents would not of occurred if a bypass had been built.

Transport for the North 2018 major roads report which shows A685 at Kirkby Stephen as Medium risk whereas the A66 Brough to Penrith is only low to medium risk.

Son of a local family killed at bottom of Midland hill. Collision would not have occurred as other vehicle involved would not have been in Kirkby Stephen had there been a bypass.

Just east of the A685 / Station road junction a man died of a heart attack. He collapsed just after getting out of his car and having an argument with the other driver following a relatively minor collision. None of the vehicles were local and would not have been in Kirkby Stephen if it had been bypassed.

Cyclist travelling east from Station yard severely injured (died following morning) after hitting a car head on just west of the A685 / Rowgate junction. The cyclist would be in town but the car driver travelling from Brough to Kendal quite probably would not have been had there been a bypass. The police calculated the cars speed to be 45 mph (30mph zone). It is most likely the cyclist tried to fit between the parked cars and the oncoming vehicle, clipped a wing mirror, which threw him into the oncoming vehicle. Cumbria County Councillor (Tim Stoddard) held a public meeting in the Methodist Chapel which was well attended. The police and authorities refused to install a speed camera on financial grounds

About 2004, myself, my wife and two children were making our way down our drive to cycle to Westgarth. Because of traffic travelling east and vehicles parked at Brockbank terrace a white BMW travelling west stopped as did the car behind, but the third vehicle (a van with unbelted passengers in the back) did not reduce speed at all and rammed into the back of the second car. One of the unbelted van passengers shot out through the windscreen and onto the road sustaining head injuries. A fourth vehicle ran into the back of the van. None of the vehicles involved would have been in Kirkby Stephen had it been bypassed

An articulated tipper lorry travelling west at high speed was about level with my drive when a vehicle pulled out of Rowgate and turned to head east. The lorry driver braked hard and partially lost control but did not hit anything. His load was rotting offal / cow stomachs etc like a kind of stinking soup. His load slopped over and rotting flesh flew into several Brockbank terrace gardens and all over the road. The fire brigade had to help clean it up and hose the road. Cumbria County Council sprayed the road with disinfectant for several days afterwards. The lorry would have been on the bypass

May 1997 I was returning from Brough and turning into my drive on a motorcycle when I was rammed from behind by a speeding car. The driver was from Ambleside and were returning there after visiting north east. Would not have been in Kirkby Stephen had it been bypassed. His car badly damaged and my motorcycle written off. Visibility was excellent, the road was dry and he left 76 ft skid marks. Was way above speed limit. He was 79 years old, had bad eyesight and surrendered his license. I received whiplash and minor injuries that took about 3 weeks to heal. My left heel was severely impacted and the plantar fasciitis resulted took 18 months to heal.

Shortly after the bypass had been cancelled Cumbria County Council were holding a public meeting in the school coffee bar to illustrate "alternatives" to the bypass. Someone came in and shouted "Jimmy Proud's house has been hit again" It had been hit by a JCB Fast Track towing a large fully loaded trailer. Front part of the house and roof had collapsed. Fortunately no one was in the front part of the house at the time. This house is on the outside of an off cambered downhill corner, and when a large vehicle is coming the other way HGVs and vehicles such as the Fast Track cannot cut the corner and run into the house. The Fast Track would have been on a bypass. This house has been hit many times including by an articulated milk tanker and an articulated lorry loaded with steel sheets. Both these vehicle would have been on a bypass. It was the Fast Track incident that embarrassed and panicked Cumbria County Council into installing the Fletcher Hill traffic lights that now cause so many queuing problems. I was on Kirkby Stephen town council at this time. Town council visited this site with Cumbria County Council highway engineers and the said the would be installing lights and a wide bollarded pavement in front of Proud's house. However when Cumbria County Council installed the lights they put the bollarded pavement on the opposite site of the road. As a result some HGVs tilted by the camber still clip Prouds house. This house and the number of times it has been hit has featured on TV as one of Britains worst roads.

The pavement bulge on the wrong side (initially not bollarded) has resulted in damage to many vehicle tyres and wheels. It was difficult to see the protruding pavement especially at night when looking into the lights of vehicles parked on the brow of the hill at the traffic lights, with their lights on. A factory worker driving east to work at Hobsons Lane clipped this kerb and swerved across the pavement and into the front of the house next to the youth hostel. The impact shook the house causing the TV to fall off its stand. Fortunately there was no one on the pavement at the time.

I was cycling though the lights one morning on the way to work tailgated by an impatient car driver. He could not initially overtake because of cars queuing at the lights in the opposite direction. He then forced an overtake, swerved in on me, forcing me off the road and pulled onto the parking area in front of the chip shop. A heated verbal exchange followed.

I have been "cut up" several times cycling through the town and my wife will no longer cycle to work in the town because of the danger and thoughtless drivers.

Local cyclist went over the handlebars just east of my house on south road. He looked like he had gone 10 round with Mike Tyson. The probable cause was road collapsing round a culvert inspection chamber. Cumbria County Council has now rebuilt the chamber but all such highway features continue to suffer excessive failure rates due to number of HGVs still passing through the town. The BT chamber frame about 10 yards east of my drive was replaced a few weeks ago on a Sunday. We made a joke about them being well paid to work Sundays and the reply was Cumbria County Council would only let them do it then because of traffic issues on other days.

Visiting cyclist went over the handlebars and somersaulted down the road just west of my house. Minor injuries. Clipped a wing mirror for same reasons as fatal cycle accident.

Driver approaching from east ran off the road and into the front of the petrol station shop killing (Shell station and Spar shop now on that site) himself. He was travelling from North East to Lancashire. It was at night and probably he fell asleep. Had there been a bypass he would have run over a grass centred roundabout instead of into a hard building.

HGV driver travelling from Lancashire to North East killed at Temple Sowerby Bridge (just before Temple Sowerby bypass built). He was only on the A66 because of the weight restriction at Kirkby Stephen.

Elderly woman killed near end of cemetery lane. She was crossing from east side of road to shop at Coop. Following the cancellation of the bypass a number of so called traffic calming measures were introduced including a mini roundabout at this location. There were a large number of crashes at this location because drivers approaching from the west could not see the roundabout over the slight hump in the road. Warning signs could not be erected because the land immediately adjacent to the road was in private ownership. The mini roundabout has now been removed, the road widened and a traffic island installed. The vehicle that struck the woman was not local and would have been on the bypass.

Elderly woman on mobility scooter killed on pelican crossing immediately to west of Market square. This crossing was introduced following the cancellation of the bypass. I was on the Town council at the time and was not in favour of a Pelican crossing but other councillors were. I was aware of the statistics showing zebra and pelican crossings to be quite dangerous. Also I was working in Penrith at this time and knew the repeated delays crossings cause for traffic. I favoured an island. The driver was a local farmer from Brough / Musgrave area so he may well have been in Kirkby Stephen even if we had a bypass. However as part of the proposed bypass significant town centre enhancements, pedestrianisation and traffic calming would have been put in place and the accident would almost certainly not have occurred.

Late 1997 elderly man crossing from Masonic Hall to Coast to Coast chip shop. "Clipped" and knocked over by eastbound car. Man only received a few bruises but according to witnesses car was speeding, not local and youths in it were laughing.

Mini roundabout installed at Hartley road junction as supposed traffic calming measure after cancellation of the bypass. This junction always had bad visibility and there had been a number of near

misses. Following the installation of the mini roundabout there were many minor collisions and the mini roundabout was removed.

Park terrace. Local female slightly pulled her car out from kerb on west side of road, struck by passing traffic that also demolished garden walls and damaged a BT pole. No injuries other than air bag impacts but road closed for several hours on summer Sunday afternoon with massive traffic jams back to Brough Sowerby.

Park Terrace. Local woman eased bonnet out of Rowgate junction to get a view past parked cars but did not pull out. A young local driver approaching from west thought she was going to fully pull out, lost control and ran into other vehicles, not the woman at the junction. From the degree of damage to the vehicles I would suspect he was travelling at quite a speed.

Tebay end of South road, vehicle parked on west side hit hard. The vehicle that hit parked car would have been on the bypass.

Late at night. I heard a loud tyre squeal and a crash. By the time I got dressed and out onto the street the car was being driven away. I do not know the cause of the accident nor heard anything afterwards as to the identity of the car or driver but it made a large gap in the field wall a few yards to the east of my drive. I prevented the sheep getting onto the road until the farmer arrived to fence it.

South road 2018. Methodist minister parked car hit by hit and run passing driver, in excess of £2000 of damage.

November 2021. Guest house immediately east of minister's house. Their car was struck and written off by a passing vehicle. See Article from Herald dated 25 December 2021 which covers this incident

August 2021 Eden Landscapes were off loading there pick up truck near No1 Brockbank Terrace when the wing mirror knocked off by a passing vehicle that would have been on a bypass. The vehicle was going to "do a runner" until I shouted "I've got his number" and he pulled up opposite Thorne Mount.

I do not think there is a month where I do not find some car bit on the road near our house, wing mirror parts are frequent, but also light glass and bits of trim / bumper are not uncommon.

Repeated HGV strikes on the Carlisle Settle railway line bridge. Closures of the line for inspection and repair are costly and extremely disruptive for rail freight and passenger trains. See attached photos taken on Thursday 2 December 2021 showing HGV strike damage to bridge protector beams and cracks in abutment. Other corners of abutments are cracked to lesser extent.. This bridge is listed as one of the most hit railway bridges in Britain despite the HGV weight restriction. For 5 years I commuted to Tebay to work and quite frequently had to detour to get round HGVs stuck under this bridge. For 13 years I commuted daily to Penrith often by M6 and still do about 2 days a week. Bridge is still hit frequently despite warning signs. Bridge is within length of road that would be bypassed. See photos 1080057, 1080054 and 1080059 These photos (taken 1 December 2021) have been sent to Network Rail.

See photo 1080061 (taken from Kirkby Stephen station car park 1 December 2021) of the road at the top of Midland hill. The road is down to one lane due to traffic lights. Wall is being rebuilt after yet another vehicle went through the all. Further to the right in the photo they no longer bother to rebuild the wall because it has been hit so frequently. Accidents here are quite severe, speeds are high and vehicles roll down the field. Significant use of fire brigade and ambulance resources. If you drive down Midland Hill into Kirkby Stephen you would see nearly all the signs on the left have been hit by HGVs. There have been vehicles through the walls near all these signs. Most of these crashing vehicles will have no business in the town, are unfamiliar with the bends and would have used a bypass.

2008 Car (owner lived on Park Terrace) parked just east of the alleyway at the end of Brockbank Terrace struck by elderly female driver in Toyota Rav 4. The Toyota rolled over onto its side and slid into the kerb its roof striking the kerb next to our front garden. The driver had head, neck and back injuries and had to be taken out through the back on a stretcher board after parts of the vehicle cut away. Both Kirkby Stephen and Appleby fire crews / engines attended.

See photo of white vehicle paint on 3 South road garden wall. This incident occurred September 2020. Fortunately no pedestrians on pavement. Pavement in this area has been mounted several times by westbound vehicles swerving to avoid eastbound vehicles pulling out to pass parked cars. It is probable a pedestrian will be struck on this narrow pavement at some time.

See photo 1080064 pale blue Jaguar parked. Where the car is parked is land already purchased by Cumbria County Council for part of the bypass western roundabout. It is presently used for storing road surfacing chippings. On the right hand side of this photo are bend warning chevron signs. Crashes into this wall are not uncommon and I think it was 2020 that there was a serious crash which resulted in people being cut from a Mercedes 4x4. Had the bypass been built these high speed cornering accidents would not happen.

The following incidents were prior to when the bypass would have been built but after the other stretches of A685 Brough to Tebay and A66 on Stainmore were improved drawing much more traffic through Kirkby Stephen and increasing speeds both on the approaches to and within the town

Cars parked at about 20 South Road, one written off the other severely damaged. Hit by passing traffic that also ran into cars coming the other way. Ambulance attended but no one taken to hospital. Passing traffic would not have been in Kirkby Stephen if there had been a bypass. The car that caused the collision was so shortened the occupants had to exit by the sunroof.

Again in the region of 16 to 20 South Road. Eastbound vehicle glanced off oncoming westbound vehicle, crossed the pavement and demolished a garden wall.

Also prior to when the bypass would have been built but after A685 upgrades is the area of the bend in photo 1080064 is the following crash. A car approaching from Tebay lost control on the bend and ran into the gardens of the Midland cottages (behind and to the RH side of the photographer. The car hit the garden fence with such force some of it was flung over the cottages into the gardens behind and some penetrated passenger side car doors. The driver was uninjured.

A local motorcyclist was returning to Kirkby Stephen from Ravenstonedale late one night. A local farmers van had been parked on the verge / road in front of Midland cottages facing the eastbound traffic with its headlights left on. The motorcyclist rounded the corner (photo 1080064) and was blinded by the van's headlights, he aimed to the left of them, get deflected off the garden fence and went into the front of the van and over the roof denting the leading edge of it. The motorcyclist was severely injured and the first people on the scene thought he was dead. Although there were obviously other factors involved this accident would not have occurred had there been a bypass.

Articulated bulk powder tanker driven by a local driver ran out of brakes descending Midland Hill. Travelling too fast to take the tight left hand turn onto Station Bridge he opted to head right across the parking area in front of Jubilee Park and into the field behind. Fortunately there was no oncoming traffic and no one on the parking area or well used footpath. Also he avoided plunging down the steep bank onto the disused railway. Large boulders have now been placed to stop parking vehicles being driven over the steep drop. Lorry would almost certainly been on a bypass as it was heading to Hartley quarry via Winton.

South east end of station bridge parapet wall hit and demolished by a runaway lorry that attempted to take the left turn onto Station bridge. Two local men lived in caravans under the bridge arches and such was the impact masonry fell off the underside of the bridge onto the caravans. Had there been a bypass the driver would have realised his brakes were fading as he approached the bypass western roundabout and could almost certainly could have run onto a wide grass verge to slow down.

community page 22 Dec 2021 another car crash on south road

Gail Faircliffe of (which is on south road) car parked opposite. On 13 / 14 March 2021 drivers side severely scraped by passing vehicle. Significant damage sufficiently into car to stop electric aerial working.

2021 black car parked opposite Hartley road junction had rear quarter panel struck by passing vehicle.

Saturday 30 April 2022. Vehicle approaching Silver Street roundabout from the east failed to stop and give way to vehicle coming onto mini roundabout from Silver Street resulting in a collision.

First week in May 2022. Crash outside 3 South Road resulted in glass and number plate parts being left on road.

Summer 2022 Chevron signs at Midland bend struck several times by eastbound vehicles running wide

Late October / Early November 2022. Midland Bend eastbound vehicle demolished chevrons and crashed through wall. Ironically this vehicle took the line where Kirkby Stephen Bypass should be. No accident if bypass had been constructed

Monday 21 November 17:30. Lorry jammed under centre of Midland bridge on Carlisle Settle railway. Traffic having to detour via Waitby or Tommy road. No accident if bypass had been constructed

Tuesday 1st Dec 2022 at approx 5.30pm. Car travelling from Newcastle to Liverpool drove into Parked car in North Road. Passing car written off. Stationary car possible write off.  
No accident if bypass had been constructed

### Summary

For the last few years the residents of Kirkby Stephen have been lucky as far as I am aware because there (as far as I am aware) not been any serious injury collisions within the town. Sooner or later this “luck” will run out.

Some are calling for less on street parking and more double yellow lines to reduce congestion. This temptation should be very, very strongly resisted. It will only result in increased traffic speeds next to narrow very substandard width pavements. Removing parked cars from the east side of South Road at the southern end was tried in the 1970s. Immediately vehicles were removed pedestrians were terrified of vehicles (particularly quarry lorries) “flying past” right next to the pavement. Within a few weeks the police again permitted parking in this area.

### Ambulance service.

I live on [REDACTED] and since 2018 have been building a new house there several days a week meaning I have a good view of the road. Most days there is a least one blue light ambulance passing, sometimes several. I have seen blue light ambulance held up for over 5 minutes just on the bit of road I can see. Sooner or later a blue light ambulance will be delayed long enough to severely worsen a patient’s condition or even kill them.

The A66 Brough to Penrith is classed as low to medium risk. The A 685 from Brough to Tebay is classed as medium risk. Travelling on the a 685 is therefore actually more dangerous than travel on the A66 although the distorted reporting leads many to mistakenly believe that the A66 is the more dangerous road.