

Direct Action against Illegal metric signs

BWMA is pleased to report the formation of direct action group *Active Resistance to Metrication* (ARM). Active Resistance to Metrication shares the same goals as BWMA but employs direct methods owing to the failure of many local authorities to replace or remove illegal metric traffic signs. ARM ("give the foot a hand") has supplied BWMA with photographs of its actions; [please click here for the Photopage.](#)

Photographs featured on this page are the property of Active Resistance to Metrication. Permission to reproduce them must be sought from its chairman Anthony Bennett ([click here](#) for email).

The ARM team in their trademark yellow jackets and helmets



What is Direct Action?

Public officials and representatives derive their authority from the people through Parliament. At no point have the people through Parliament given authority for local councils to set up metric traffic signs. Councils that set up metric traffic signs defy the people and Parliament.

"Direct action" can be seen as the following: action by members of the public who take their authority direct from the law and Parliament in order to apply the said law.

Direct Action and the Law

Active Resistance to Metrication believes that direct action against metric signs is lawful under Section 131 of the 1980 Highways Act:

"If a person without lawful authority or excuse pulls down or obliterates a traffic sign placed on or over the highway - he is guilty of an offence; but it is a defence in any proceedings under

this subsection to show that the traffic sign was not lawfully placed".

ARM believes that the above passage, making physical action again unlawful signs a minor, non-criminal offence, protects members of the public from criminal prosecution. For a full awareness of the legal issues and the 2002 court case, please follow [this link](#). For further information on Active Resistance to Metrication, please contact BWMA's liaison officer Derek Norman, telephone 01480 435837, email rebeldel@waitrose.com

Examples of Direct Action

"Blacking out" illegality

The most elementary means of direct action is to cover over illegal metric indications with adhesive tape. By placing the tape over unauthorised metric terms, the sign becomes "legal". The sign is not damaged and no other information is obscured. The sign is then reported to the local council.

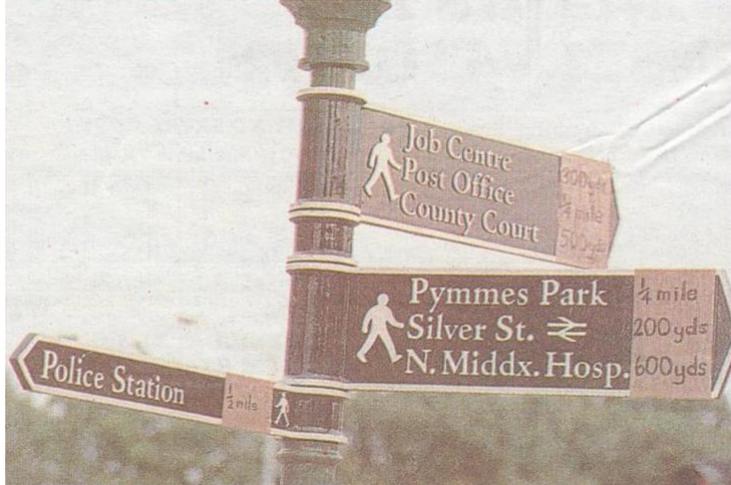
An example of illegality covered over



Temporary conversion

The sign below was an illegal "fingerpost" sign in Edmonton, north London. The sign was converted to legal units in August 2001. Direct action activists made a note of the metric distances, then wrapped parcel tape around the illegal elements, thereby removing them from public view. Using an indelible marker pen, they then wrote in the distances in legal units.

A converted sign



Fingerpost signs - National De-metrication Programme

Active Resistance to Metrication has launched a nationwide "de-metrication" programme of illegal pedestrian signs where local authorities have been negligent in applying the law. The images below demonstrate how Active Resistance converts the signs to legal status.

The sign before legalisation



Preparing the legal distance plates



Applying glue



Fixing the plates to the sign



The corrected signs, before... and after

300m



330 yd



800m



1/2 mile



Physical return of illegal signs to local authorities

Another tactic employed by Active Resistance is to remove unlawful signs from the streets and return them to their owners, the local councils, with a request that they replace the signs with lawful equivalents.

Unlawful sign

Lawful sign



Active Resistance to Metrication returns illegal metric signs to local Council for replacement

