RAC
Media Centre

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Forget the season of goodwill: 'tis the season for 'carguments' ... and it's usually a visit to the in-laws that's to blame

- *Up to 4m of us will have Christmas 'carguments' starting today*
- *Women more prone to arguments than men*
- *People in East Anglia far less feisty than the rest of the UK*

Festive tensions can cause nerves to snap at the best of times, but put the family into the confined space of car on a Christmas trip to the in-laws and you have the perfect recipe for a 'cargument', new data suggests.

A survey of 2,000 people* by RAC Cars has revealed that one in four (26%) admit to spats in the car during the Christmas getaway to see family and friends. Three in five (61%) say they argue with their spouse or partner, one in 10 (13%) row with their children and a quarter (25%) admit to squabbling with both their partner and the kids.

With an anticipated 15.7m** car journeys to see family and friends taking place this Christmas we can expect a good deal of bickering in the car, with more than 4m resulting in a festive cargument. And, it looks like the classic and clichéd tensions around 'the mother-in-law' are usually to blame as more than half (56%) of those surveyed by the raccars.co.uk website say that the bust-up is more often about visiting so-called 'loved-ones' – some of whom they've possibly been avoiding all year.

With the vast majority of Christmas journeys being made to see parents (59%), the air-conditioning will definitely be needed to keep the in-car temperature from reaching boiling point.

Women appear to be slightly more volatile with 27% admitting to rowing in the car while 24% of men say they get into 'carguments' over the yuletide season. And, it appears that people in East Anglia are the most chilled with just 15% saying they row behind the wheel, but tensions are twice as high in Northern Ireland where three in 10 (31%) admit to spats in the car closely followed by people in the South West (30%) and up-tight Londoners (29%).

The **top-ten reasons** for drivers and passengers getting hot under the collar and into a heated argument at the wheel are:

1. Visiting family - 55%
2. Lengthy traffic delays - 46%
3. Getting lost - 45%
4. Setting off too late - 40%
5. Forgetting something or leaving the presents behind - 28%
6. The kids fighting - 21%
7. Going to see the in-laws - 19%
8. Money – 19%
9. Relationship issues - 19%
10. Choice of radio station - 10%

When asked why they thought a verbal fight erupts among passengers almost

half (48%) said it was because driving can be stressful; 44% said that the confined environment of a car makes them feel agitated; and 44% said it was the stress of having to rush that makes them flustered and feisty.

One in five (21%) admitted to arguing more in the car than elsewhere while three-quarters (76%) say they argue as much in the car as in other places, but 3% said they never, ever argue in the car. However things can get incredibly heated with a third (33%) admitting that they have even stopped and asked a passenger to get out of the car.

Thankfully, it appears that peace on earth can return with over a third (35%) saying that they always make up before they get out of the car and a further 60% say they sometimes do. Sadly though, a belligerent one in 25 say they never make up after a 'cargument'.

RAC Cars spokeswoman Hannah Darby said: "Christmas is a precious time of the year and an opportunity to spend quality time with family and loved-ones, but for some it is also loaded with stress and frustration which can boil over into a verbal brawl.

"The anticipation of spending time with family and the in-laws appears to lead many of us to get stressed and have arguments with our nearest and dearest.

"The best thing to do is avoid travelling at the busiest times – which should see you dodge lengthy delays – and it is always good to have an emergency, secret code you share with your partner for an early departure if family tensions are getting on top of you.

"Modern cars are far more reliable so should not add to the stress by breaking down, but it is always wise to do some simple checks like the oil, coolant and washer water. If you are on a long journey consider taking a DVD to keep the kids entertained and plan where and when you will stop and swap drivers."

Motorists and passengers recognise that all the angst is not a great thing with nine out of ten (90%) saying that they would like to stop arguing and one in five (19%) stating they believe arguments in the car can be very distracting and even dangerous.

Those surveyed do have tactics to calm things down. Four in 10 (41%) will turn on music; 54% will change the subject; one in 10 will start to sing; 4% stop the car and go for a walk, but almost half (48%) of us admit to clamming up and stopping talking for the remainder of the journey.

** Survey conducted by OnePoll with a representative sample of 2,000 UK residents aged over 18 between 21 and 22nd December 2015.*

*** RAC Traffic Watch survey data indicates there will be 15.7m cars travelling to see relatives between Christmas Eve and 28 December inclusive*

Notes to Editors

About RAC Cars

RAC Cars is the RAC's 'free to advertise' online marketplace for new and used cars. The motorist's champion waived the fees for both private sellers and dealers in response to demands for an alternative to existing used car websites that charge high advertising rates and currently has more than 250,000 used cars for sale.

Research from the RAC shows that buyers, too, don't want to be stung by purchasing a dud – something the new RAC Cars website has been specifically designed to address. More than 7.4 million used cars sold in the UK every year, with around 2.8 million sold privately.

RAC Cars provides easy access to a range of products that can give buyers confidence that their next car won't turn out to be a 'lemon' – from an RAC car data check, the UK's most comprehensive vehicle check that is delivered to a user in seconds, to booking a full vehicle inspection by an experienced RAC engineer. The site also highlights the RAC's own Approved Dealer network giving total reassurance with a full history check, a thorough preparation to the RAC's 82-point BuySure standard, three months' RAC Warranty and a minimum of three months' Breakdown Cover.

RAC Cars has also partnered with carwowto give new car buyers absolute peace-of-mind removing the need for haggling or hassling phone calls. Buyers simply specify their car – including any options on the carwow portal

– and it will liaise with approved dealers nationwide to get the best price on that car.

The site has also been refreshed with the ‘We Love Cars’ marketing campaign giving raccars.co.uk a compelling new look with ‘retro-style’ bight orange neon signs and an eye-catching orange sports car and the call to action: ‘Find your perfect match and sell your car for FREE’.

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