



# December 2015 Network

**A networking tool for Activists and other interested parties**

<b>Editorial</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Annual Group Conference 2016.</b>	<b>2-4</b>
<b>MAG Press Release - Always On Headlights</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Report – Leon and Lembit</b>	<b>4-6</b>
<b>Open letter to all Bikers in Greater Manchester</b>	<b>6-7</b>
<b>Driving resource</b>	<b>7-8</b>
<b>ACTION PLEASE – to keep this successful event going. Salisbury MAG.</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Bill to give councils speed limit powers passes first reading</b>	<b>8-9</b>
<b>Consultation launch: Motoring Services Strategy <i>Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency – Action please.</i></b>	<b>9-10</b>
<b>New report confirms dangers of ‘multi-tasking’ while driving</b>	<b>10-11</b>
<b>End of the road for grey speed cameras</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Regions to be given new powers to ‘transform transport’</b>	<b>11-12</b>
<b>Tristan’s Trawl</b>	<b>12-13</b>
<b>RAC calls for more action to tackle mobile phone offenders</b>	<b>13-14</b>
<b>Northern Ireland – Cyclists fined</b>	<b>14-15</b>
<b>Contacts</b>	<b>15-16</b>

## Editorial

**Firstly**, apologies for the lateness of the November edition. This was nothing to do with anyone in MAG, however, there were complications with the service provider when the office move occurred. Thanks to the unsung heroes of MAG volunteers who sorted it. I'm not going to name them because I don't want to leave anyone out – but you're the best.

Thanks also to Tink Hammond whose been feeding me her 'trawl' but she's a busy lady and now we have Tristan on board whose kindly taken over from her.

There are a couple of things in this edition which require 'action'. One of these being the continuance of the Salisbury Bike Show – so if you can lend assistance on the day, please contact Fin accordingly.

Interestingly, this edition includes a report on the dangers of multi-tasking whilst driving. Nothing you or I didn't already know (mobile phone use being the worst offender), however, the stats are interesting.

I'm going to keep this editorial short and wish you a great Yuletide. January 2016 edition will be with you after the first week in January when things return to 'normal' – whatever that is.

Be safe, AG.

[Acknowledgments:- George Legg. Tristan Foord. Steve Blay (Blayz). Selina Lavender. Leon Manning. Lembit Opik. And anyone else I've forgotten.]

Deadline for copy for the January edition is 20<sup>th</sup> December to [aine@mag-uk.org](mailto:aine@mag-uk.org) subject heading:  
**Network**

## **Annual Group Conference (AGC) 2016**

*Next year's AGC will be hosted by Barnsley and Doncaster (BAD) MAG.*

*Date: Saturday 9th of April*

*Venue: Shaw Lane Rugby Club, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 6HZ*

“MAG's Annual Group Conference is the ideal opportunity for members from all corners of the country to come together to discuss the organisation's successes, the way forward, and to vote on matters such as Motions that have been brought to the Conference, along with some of the posts that will be up for election. It is also an opportunity to acknowledge MAG groups and individuals for outstanding service. Although MAG is obliged, by law, to hold an annual conference and certain due processes must be observed, it is by no means a dry and dusty event; there is plenty of lively discussion and exchange of ideas and a chance, in the evening, for some downtime to catch up with friends old and new and to celebrate the country's leading riders' rights organisation.”

In accordance with the constitution we invite motions and nominations to be received no later than the 31st of December.

The following roles are up for election at AGC 2016:

Directors of The Motorcycle Action Group Limited (2 positions, tenure 4 years), National Chair, National Clubs Officer and National Reps Liaison Officer.

Both motions and nominations may be sent by post: MAG, Unit C13 Holly Farm Business Park, Honiley, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 1NP OR email: [central-office@mag-uk.org](mailto:central-office@mag-uk.org)

From the constitution:

5. g. All matters to be included within the Agenda of the Group Conference should be sent in writing and received at the Central Office of the Company not later than midnight on the last day of December in the year preceding the year of the General Conference. Submissions can be sent by email to [nominations@mag-uk.org](mailto:nominations@mag-uk.org) or by post to the registered office address. Submissions received by post on the first working day following 31st December shall be accepted. All proposals should include the name, address and Membership number of the person proposing the matter and the person seconding it.

5.i. All nominations for the directors or other officers of the Company must be seconded and must be submitted after 1st November in each year. Submissions can be sent by email to [nominations@mag-uk.org](mailto:nominations@mag-uk.org) or by post to the registered office address. Submissions received by post on the first working day following 31st December shall be accepted. All proposals should include the name, address and Membership number of the person proposing the matter and the person seconding it. Each nominee must have been a Member for at least 12 months prior to the nomination and must include a manifesto of not more than 1200 words with their nomination.

In addition we invite nominees for the following awards:

The Fred Hill Freedom Award - Awarded to the MAG Member who in the opinion of the National Committee has made an outstanding, sustained, significant and positive contribution to the work of the Group over a period of years.

The Richard Tegg Award - Awarded to the MAG Member who in the opinion of the National Committee has made a sustained, significant and positive contribution to the work of the Group over a period of years at a local level. National Committee members are not eligible for this award in relation to their national work or NC activity, but may be nominated in respect of specified local non-NC activity as an ordinary member.

The Steve Tannock Teamwork Award - Awarded to the local group, region or other team of MAG members who, in the opinion of the National Committee, have made a significant joint contribution to the work of the Group.

Honorary Life Membership - Awarded in respect for significant work over a sustained period on behalf of the group. Except in exceptional circumstances nominees for Honorary Life membership should have been fully paid up ordinary members of MAG for an unbroken period of at least ten years prior to nomination for this award.

The Simon Millward Lifetime Achievement Award - Awarded to a person, who, in the opinion of the National Committee has, over their lifetime, made a significant contribution to motorcycling. (The nominee may be a non-member of MAG at the time the award is granted.)

Media Award - Awarded to a person or publication who in the opinion of the National Committee has been MAG-friendly in the promotion of and/or reporting of MAG.

Nominations for awards may be made directly to your Regional Rep OR to the Chair via email: chair@mag-uk.org or post: via the Central office address above. The NC will consider all nominees for awards at it's February meeting.

Selina Lavender, MAG Chair

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### **MAG Press Release - Dated: 5 -11 -15. Always On Headlights**

The introduction of AOH (always on headlights) which applies to all new motorcycles imported into the UK from January 1 2016 is a source of concern to MAG.

MAG is concerned that this has been pushed through by EU bureaucrats with no evidence to prove that it will deliver enough benefit to justify the measure.

MAG recognises that the motorcycle industry enjoys advantage from a uniformity of production specification across the EU where many countries already require motorcyclists to use headlights in daytime.

Notwithstanding this, MAG is fundamentally opposed to the endorsement of what it views as safety gimmicks which are being introduced on the back of a frivolous experimental sentiment. Such a measure implies that a motorcycle is not something which the average motorist should be expected to be able to identify easily.

MAG is pleased that UK law does not, however require riders to use daytime headlights as the option to fit a switch and exercise intelligent judgement remains open. The onus will, however lie with the rider to spend money to fit the switch while insurers will have to be informed of a change of specification from the original.

MAG President Ian Mutch said, "If a motorist cannot see a motorcycle and rider in perfect visibility without it being illuminated by blazing lights then a question about that driver's capabilities should be asked. Road safety is largely about attitude and caution not fashionable gimmicks whose benefit remains the subject of total speculation."

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### **From MAG's Political unit that is the dynamic duo of Leon and Lembit.**

This month's activities have been centred on justice, access and blueprints for action, with a number of successes along the way.

1 Leon has been out and about around the UK to help regional activists promote MAG's Five Pathways for Progress document. This gives local authorities a clear idea of

what they can and should do to make conditions better for bikers. Leon is using this as a key document to define what MAG stands for and wants to achieve. Take a look at the document, and if you can't find it call Leon or HQ who will be happy to help – as will Stevie B. – a key player in the creation of this document.

This combination of local activism and support from our professional team is delivering real progress. The benefits of making motorcycle access to bus lanes a region-wide measure are being increasingly recognised along with the need for parking facilities that are on a par with cycling. Please note though that all requests for visits by Leon (and Lembit) need to go through Julie at the office for approval, (01926 844 064).

2           Lembit has been working on justice in courts for bikers. There's been a question mark about whether riders experience discrimination in our courts. In a major session with a magistrate, Brian Jones, in Somerset, Lembit learned the ropes about something called 'The Sentencing Guidelines.' These are all about how guilt is decided in a magistrates' court, and how the level of sentence needs to be determined. 'I think the guidelines themselves don't contain a prejudicial element against riders. However, we still need to look at the application of those guidelines. It seems that magistrates' courts do have checks and balances in the system, but we have to be sure. The same goes for Crown Courts and that's work in progress.

3           Another part of the justice campaign is the manner in which inquests deal with the death of a rider. Lembit attended the inquest into the death of Greg Taylor, who died in unclear circumstances and whose death his mother has been campaigning about ever since. 'The inquest recorded the death as an accident,' reports Lembit, 'but in the context of the Justice Campaign, there are some unsettling aspects to the case. You can read up on it in The Road magazine. We're still assessing the facts on this. I'll keep you posted.'

4           Our fight continues against the spread of cycle lane segregation schemes that involve new trip hazards for bikers being bolted to public roads in the form of 'Armadillos', 'Orcas' or 'Tomb Stones'. Leon is supporting those battles in various regions across the UK and we need to redouble our efforts now that we have had a confirmed report of a scooterist being tripped into a crash by an 'Armadillo' scheme in Dagenham.

5           MAG activist Michael Armstrong had a rather special pillion passenger on the back of his bike – Sue Hayman MP. Michael says 'the best bit is that Sue has got the biking bug back and she has booked for next year. Next step is to convince her to pass her bike test or get a trike instead of a convertible car!' Keep it up Michael – and send Mr Mutch and Lembit those pictures!

6           In London, Lembit met with Lib Dem Greater London Authority leader Caroline Pigeon, to test the water in terms of Liberal Democrat motorcycle policy. She left the door open for more talks, but they didn't go into detail at the time. 'There are only two Lib Dems on the Authority, but we still need to keep contacts with all parties. I worry about some pedestrian and cycling proposals in London, which keep Leon very well occupied. I hope it is helpful for us to maintain this kind of dialogue though – friends are always more useful than foes.'

7           Lembit will be based at the NEC for the Motorcycle Live national motorcycle show from 28th November. 'It's open house as far as I'm concerned. I meet members I haven't spoken to before and there's plenty of talking to do with potential friends of MAG. If you're there, don't be a stranger. Leon will also be at the show during the first weekend as his main mission is to encourage support for MAG from key figures in the Motorcycle and that's when they attend. And, both of us hope to see you there.

8           In London, Leon has been focused on two key projects that could deliver big benefits for bikers. First is a new handbook for Road Safety Scheme designers that TfL have to create and publish as it is one of the formal 'Actions' in the Mayor's Motorcycle Safety Action Plan. It is aimed at raising awareness of what 'safety' scheme designers need to consider to avoid building schemes that actually make roads more dangerous for motorcyclists – and Leon has been working hard to ensure that it will be punchy enough to make a difference in London and all urban areas in the UK.

The second project Leon has been working on is a Greater London Authority (GLA) investigation of policy responses to motorcycling by Transport for London (TfL). The first stage of this was a public meeting of the GLA Transport Committee which MAG was invited to contribute to as experts in that field. Leon was thanked by the GLA members for a background pack he gave them prior to the meeting. But he says that the two TfL Directors who were answering for TfL "may not have been so pleased by some of the shortfalls that it and our input highlighted."

9           Dave Wigham and Lembit met in central London, leading to plans for a MAG lobby of Parliament. 'This needs proper approval by my boss, but - subject to agreement - it could be a good way to boost profile and membership while involving many MAG members.' Dave's family were very patient as Dave and Lembit did what bikers do; namely, talk about bikes.

10           And finally, the usual request: please get in touch with your MP, and ask to meet and see if you can get them to sign up. Doesn't matter when or where – the connections are brilliant for our presence in the political world and that helps us more than can be put in words.

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## Open Letter to All Bikers in Greater Manchester

### Pathways to Progress Campaign for Greater Manchester 2015-2016

My name is Steve Blayz Blay and I am the Area Rep for Salford. I would like to ask you all for your support for the Campaigns we are undertaking within Greater Manchester on your behalf.

I am addressing this letter to both Clubs and Individuals that live in Salford, Manchester, Tameside, Oldham, Rochdale, Bolton, Wigan, Trafford, Stockport and Bury.

The Pathways to Progress Document previously shown in this magazine has been presented to the Leaders of the above Councils and as I write this we are beginning to get some stock answers back that do not represent direct answers to any of the questions posed.

So what's new? I hear you ask. You I say. You can make the difference between being fined or not, for using Bus Lanes, You are the difference between someone getting hurt or not by the increased introduction of Light Segregation for Cycle Lanes (Armadillos Etc.). Only you know best where to park your Bike securely in Your town and if more parking is needed you know where. You live in areas where new developments are planned, new roads are designed, and changes to existing road structures are being undertaken, you can be a part of those plans to make them safe for us Bikers. And finally, you know best where the hazards are in Your area and with your help we can get them fixed, changed and made better by tapping into a single point of contact for your local council.

So What do I want you to do? Nothing much, just be yourselves, every time you are out and about and you see something that bothers you, take a note, take a picture, if you hear of a new obstruction going down on the road let me know, be as detailed as possible, if someone you know knows of or hears of someone who has come a cropper because of an armadillo, let me know, give them my details, If you know someone on Your Local Council who is willing to be that point of contact, let me know,

Let me put the questions about more secure Bike Parking if you want it.

I am making my way around your Local Transport Officers regarding Motorbikes & Scooters being allowed in Bus Lanes.

Lastly, if you feel that you want to do more to protect our lifestyle but don't know where to start, or who to ask, You can't go far wrong by reading the Pathways to Progress Document and if you agree with its' aims, talk to me about how you can help introduce it into our local towns.

If you feel you want to join the growing group of area Reps within the Northwest region ask any Rep or speak to our Regional Rep.

### **Driving resource**

You may have missed this...

The DVSA are releasing lots of helpful information under 'Safe Driving for Life'.

Check them out via their Website, Facebook, Twitter or YouTube links (details below)

<https://www.safedrivingforlife.info/>

<https://www.facebook.com/safedrivinglife?rdr=p>

<https://twitter.com/safedrivinglife>

**ACTION PLEASE – to keep this successful event going.**

Salisbury MAG are currently negotiating with Wiltshire Council regarding the 2016 Spring Surprise Bike Show. The proposed date is 17 April 2016. One of the prerequisites from the Council is that the number of marshals is increased. If anyone wishes to volunteer as a marshal, or indeed has any marshalling qualifications please contact Fin Colson [salisbury-rep@mag-uk.org](mailto:salisbury-rep@mag-uk.org) / 07450 992298. Without your help this show may not be granted a licence.

## **Bill to give councils speed limit powers passes first reading**

A legislative Bill has been successfully introduced in Parliament to give parish and town councils the power to hold community referendums to alter speed limits.

The Speed Limits on Roads (Devolved Powers) Bill\* was proposed by Scott Mann, Conservative MP for North Cornwall, on 18 November.

Mr Mann says that numerous meetings with constituents, parish councils and schools has made him aware of a “clear need for empowerment of communities to set speed limits themselves to make their roads safer”.

In his speech to MPs he said he wanted to make roads safer, particularly for children who face “hazardous walks to school” due to fast moving, high volume traffic at peak hours.

Mr Mann said: “If there is a majority who wants their speed limit changed, then they can stand back (and) attribute their name to it. They can say that they helped shape their community by putting an X in the box on the ballot paper.

“Ultimately I believe this Bill will empower people and help them address issues that directly affect them on the roads.”

Mr Mann suggests that in order to save costs and time, referendums would be held alongside national and local elections. A proposition would be put to the local electorate asking if they want to change the current speed limit of a specific road or area.

If the electorate vote in favour of a new limit, then the local authority would have to begin proceedings to implement it.

Commenting after the Bill passed its first reading, Mr Mann added: "It's time to put the power into people's hands. Local people know the dangers present on their community roads, so why not let them change their own speed limits?"

"If my constituents want to lower the speed limit on their main road from 30 to 20mph, then they should have the power to do so.

"In 2012, over 550 people were killed on 30mph roads, whereas there were nine fatalities on 20mph roads, so the numbers speak for themselves."

The second reading of the Bill will take place on 5 February 2016.

Full title: A Bill to amend Part VI of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, to make provision about the powers and duties of parish and town councils in relation to applying for speed limit orders; to provide for the conduct of local referendums to determine whether such applications should be made; and for connected purposes.

- See more at: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/4717.html#sthash.zJdOHSeO.dpuf>

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## Consultation launch: Motoring Services Strategy

*Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency sent this bulletin at 13-11-2015 11:33 AM GMT.*

### **ACTION: Consultation launch: Motoring Services Strategy.**

The Government wants to hear your views on how to improve the services offered by DVSA and DVLA.

The Department for Transport (DfT) have today (Friday 13 November) launched proposals for improving the driving test. This forms part of a wider review of motoring services in Great Britain.

The consultation sets out a number of other proposals to improve road safety and increase efficiency in government agencies, including:

- introducing more flexible driving test slots including weekends and evenings, to reduce waiting times and offer learner drivers a greater range of choice
- offering tests from a range of venues
- reviewing fees for all services provided by motoring agencies and potentially changing providers for some services
- consolidating services at motoring agencies and improving digital experience for customers

This will form part of the government's ongoing work to streamline public services and save the taxpayer money.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/a-driving-test-fit-for-the-21st-century>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/motoring-services-strategy-a-strategic-direction-2016-to-2020>

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## New report confirms dangers of ‘multi-tasking’ while driving

A new report published today (20 Nov) confirms the dangers of ‘multi-tasking’ while driving, and identifies texting and talking on a mobile phone as the ‘most dangerous of driving multi-tasks’.

‘The battle for attention’, jointly produced by Dr Neale Kinnear and Dr Alan Stevens from the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), and Neil Greig from the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM), has been published in advance of Road Safety Week 2015 (23-29 Nov).

Dr Kinnear, who is a principal psychologist in the study of human behaviour and transport, and Dr Stevens, who is chief scientist and research director with internationally recognised expertise in ‘Human-Machine Interaction’, both reviewed existing research behind in-car distractions to understand the various cognitive processes and complexities in driving.

Their research focuses on the dangers involved when drivers try and engage in more than one task, with results confirming it can have a ‘detrimental’ effect on the quality and accuracy of driving performance.

Looking at the five key areas of distraction - cognitive, visual, auditory, manual and exposure time - the research shows that texting engages three of these to a ‘high’ level – cognitive, visual and manual. A mobile phone conversation also engages three of five areas of distraction to a ‘high’ level – cognitive, audible and exposure time.

Distraction example	Cognitive	Visual	Audible	Manual	Exposure time
Mobile phone – Texting	H	H	L	H	M
Mobile phone – Dialling	M	H	L	H	L
Mobile phone – Conversation	H	L	H	L	H
Sat-nav (following route)	M	M	L	L	M
Eating and smoking	L	M	L	H	M
External signage or advertising	M	H	L	L	L
Speech-to-text or voice control	H	M	M	L	L

The research also found that eating and smoking while driving result in a high level of manual distraction, and that external signage and roadside advertising can create high levels of visual distraction.

While sat-navs are not highly distracting, they do provide a medium level of cognitive and visual distraction, and exposure time.

The report concludes: “Research has confirmed that tasks almost always interfere with other tasks carried out at the same time. The brain never actually focuses on two tasks at the same time – it switches back and forward between them.

“As driving is so complex and requires various cognitive processes, taking on another task when driving can mean a driver is unable to pay sufficient attention to all the activities required for safe driving. This can lead to a processing failure resulting in a loss of control, putting the driver and other road users in physical danger.”

Sarah Sillars, IAM’s chief executive officer, said: “This is proof, should it be needed, that multi-tasking and driving simply don’t mix.

“While there are plenty of distractions to tempt the driver, the individual needs to know that the phone, or internet, or the iPod simply don’t matter – driving is the only activity that should occupy your mind while at the wheel.

“It’s important that we work with the government, car makers and educators to deliver a renewed focus on driver training and road safety – and that people know that distractions can be fatal.”

- See more at:- <http://www.trl.co.uk/news-hub/trl-press-releases/2015/november/multi-tasking-at-the-wheel-a-potentially-fatal-myth/>  
-: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/e1wa9obh2lgcdjp/IAM%20Driver%20Distraction.pdf?dl=0>  
<http://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDVSA/bulletins/124f276#.VkXv6lwsvzA.facebook>  
[ok](#)

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## **End of the road for grey speed cameras**

The DfT has announced that all working speed cameras will be coloured yellow by October 2016, in what it describes as a “common sense approach to cameras”.

The move, which follows a review of cameras, is intended to “increase the visibility of all speed cameras on the network” and ensure “motorists are not unfairly penalised”.

The announcement has been welcomed by the AA and RAC.

There are approximately 200 camera sites on England’s motorways, some of which contain multiple cameras. Existing guidelines already make clear that where cameras are used on the strategic road network signs must be put up to alert drivers. The DfT says this latest move “will ensure maximum visibility of the cameras themselves”.

See more at:- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/end-of-the-road-for-grey-speed-cameras>

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## **Regions to be given new powers to ‘transform transport’**

Government plans to give the regions new powers to ‘transform transport in their areas’ have taken a step forward this week with the publication of proposals in Parliament.

Part of the government's 'drive to deliver economic growth across the country', the proposals would put regional transport bodies, like Transport for the North (TfN), on a statutory footing, as promised in summer 2015 Budget.

Currently, decision-making for strategic transport schemes is centralised at national level. However, the government says that greater local input is needed 'to drive transformational growth and rebalance the economy'.

The legal powers and duties will allow groups to advise transport ministers on investment priorities in their own areas and on strategic transport schemes to boost growth. Statutory status is also intended to give regional transport bodies the permanence they need to plan for the long term.

Andrew Jones, transport minister, said: "Good transport doesn't just help people get around, it helps them get on. It has a fundamental role in driving economic growth, and this goes hand in hand with devolving power to those that know their economies and customers best.

"We know the north as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Putting bodies like Transport for the North on a statutory footing is a vital part of our plan to rebalance the economy, and will give greater emphasis to the ongoing work on options for rail and road improvements that will benefit passengers across the north.

"Legal status will ensure that TfN's impact and influence, and the transformational change that can result, is felt by customers for years to come."

- See more at: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/4698.html#sthash.a7qqEmne.dpuf>  
-: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/regions-to-be-offered-legal-powers-to-transform-transport>

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## **Tristan's Trawl**

Motoring lawyer says bicycles should carry ID plates and riders wear hi-vis  
Read more at <http://www.cyclingweekly.co.uk/news/latest-news/motoring-lawyer-says-bicycles-should-carry-id-plates-and-riders-wear-hi-vis-197113#jEemX44FqLlx250p.99>

(Even robots are getting into the fun of 2 wheels)

Yamaha Reveals Autonomous Motorcycle-Riding Humanoid Robot  
<http://www.techtimes.com/articles/100725/20151028/yamaha-reveals-autonomous-motorcycle-riding-humanoid-robot.htm>

The all-new Triumph Bonneville T120 and T120 Black are the two models that will strike the most authentic chord with Bonneville fans, and are the direct replacements for the current Bonneville and T100. The new T120 joins the equally new [Thrupton and Thrupton R](#), and another fresh addition to Triumph's classic range, the [Street Twin](#).

<http://www.motorcyclenews.com/news/new-bikes/2015/october/new-triumph-bonneville-t120-for-2016/>

The Circuit of Wales, the new proposed home of the British Grand Prix, has passed its final planning permission obstacle, after a public inquiry agreed to transfer common land to the project to give them the space required to

build. <http://www.motorcyclenews.com/sport/motogp/2015/november/circuit-of-wales-passes-final-planning-permission-obstacle/>

**THE** final pretence that speed cameras are intended to increase safety was dropped yesterday when Bedfordshire police and crime commissioner Ollie Martin announced intentions to permanently switch on the speed cameras on stretches of the M1 passing through his region.

Read more: <http://www.visordown.com/motorcycle-news--general-news/cash-cow-speed-cameras-back/28402.html#ixzz3sKlrR2Q6>

MILAN SHOW: Suzuki strip SV650 naked

The SV has been a mainstay of the mid-market since the end of the 1990s, and a recent resurgence in popularity of the half-faired **SV650S** has clearly given **Suzuki** the impetus to reintroduce the naked version first launched in 1999. <http://www.motorcyclenews.com/news/new-bikes/2015/november/suzuki-sv650-2016/>

MILAN SHOW: Kawasaki target supercharged future

Kawasaki have revealed more images and details about their new direction for supercharged motorcycles with the Spirit Charger and Soul Charger concept images, and their new 'Balanced Supercharged Engine', at the Milan show. <http://www.motorcyclenews.com/news/new-bikes/2015/november/kawasakis-supercharged-future/>

Peterborough MAG Promo Video I couldn't not add this.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Wd9JmFzsOc>

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## **RAC calls for more action to tackle mobile phone offenders**

The RAC has expressed concern over "a worrying mismatch" between the level of mobile phone offences motorists see happening on the roads, and the number of prosecutions.

The RAC points to figures which show that while significantly fewer motorists are being prosecuted for using a mobile phone while driving, DfT stats indicate the number of people using a mobile phone at the wheel has remained consistent.

In 2014, there were 17,414 prosecutions for mobile phone offences in magistrates' courts in England and Wales - 15,157 fewer than in 2009, which equates to a 47% reduction. In contrast, a DfT study earlier this year found that 1.6% of drivers in England were observed using a mobile phone during 2014, slightly up from 1.4% in 2009.

The RAC attributes the mismatch to cuts in roads policing, and also cites statistics which show mobile phone use is increasingly a contributory factor in collisions; in 2014, 492 accidents were deemed a result of a driver using a phone, an increase of 40% on 2010.

Pete Williams, RAC head of external affairs, said: “There is still an enormous gulf between what the law states – that handheld mobile phones should not be used behind the wheel – and what motorists see happening on our roads.

“We have already highlighted the large reductions in the numbers of full-time roads policing officers affecting many police forces. On average across the country there was a 23% cut between 2010 and 2014 – meaning there are 1,279 fewer officers patrolling our roads.

“With budgetary constraints, roads policing numbers are not going to dramatically increase in the near future, but we believe that now is time to halt the decline and stop further year-on-year cuts.

“We also look to the Government to propose other means of enforcing the existing law. Can technology play a greater role in helping catch offenders?”

The RAC is also calling for greater public awareness of the dangers of using a mobile phone while driving.

Pete Williams added: “Is there a role for a national public awareness campaign on the dangers of using a phone at the wheel, similar to the hard-hitting campaigns which have helped stigmatise drink-driving?

“The goal for ministers and policymakers is surely to make the use of mobile phones at the wheel as socially unacceptable as drink-driving.

“With this the number one road safety concern for motorists, coupled with official data showing fewer people are being caught, there will be an overwhelming frustration that too many drivers are simply getting away with it.”

- See more at: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/4645.html#sthash.gtlhXn5k.dpuf>  
-: <http://www.rac.co.uk/press-centre#/pressreleases/prosecutions-for-motorists-using-a-mobile-phone-at-the-wheel-fall-by-half-in-five-years-1235973>

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#### **Northern Ireland - Cyclists fined**

According to Garda figures, 244 cyclists across the State were stopped by gardaí and fines – of €40 per incident, between mid-July and September 30th this year.

Speaking about the figures, Minister for Transport Paschal Donohoe said:

“Unsurprisingly, most fines have been issued for the offence of breaking a red light (144), with failure to have appropriate lighting on a bike accounting for the next highest number of fines at 44”.

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