

Network

JANUARY 2014

views expressed in this publication are not necessarily the views of the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG UK) or the Editor

Editorial	2
From the Chairman: No change to UK MOT regulations from Europe.	2-3
MAG Press Release: Brighton Speed Trials	3-4
Ethanol (E10) in petrol – East Yorkshire MAG	4
Obituary – Nick Baldwin	4
Speed limit reduction on part of M1.	5
DVLA – direct debit and abolition of tax disc. Cuts unnecessary red tape for motorists.	5-7
MCN reports – Trail Riders fury as Peak District vows to continue lane closures	7
Ministry of Justice – Traffic Courts	8-9
Governments U-turn on young driver safety	9-10
FEMA – Compromise on EU Technical Inspections	10
Events and contact details – please see MAG UK website.	

Acknowledgments:- George Legg. Yorkshire MAG. Rowan Publications

EDITORIAL.

Hi Everyone,

First thing to say is apologies for this being a little later than usual - blame Xmas & New Year!

Normally, the first edition of a New Year edition is a bit thin on the ground with relevant information. However, this time round there are a few things worth noting.

The postponement of Ethanol (E10) in petrol until 2016, can only be a good thing. Yorkshire MAG began the Campaigning on this so a lot of thanks go to them. However, it is only a postponement and MAG knows we need to remain vigilant.

More good news from the EU concerns Road Worthiness Testing. In a statement from our Chairman on PTI [periodic testing inspection] you'll see that our MoT is already stringent enough so we should be in the clear

From a personal viewpoint I'm having trouble believing that the reduced speed limits on part of the M1 are a "green issue". Having read several comments on face-book about this issue and the section of motorway concerned, it appears this is continually congested. This, then, is the most likely cause of that area not reaching EU pollution targets wouldn't you think? But, hey, what do I know?

[Any copy for Network, please email me, subject heading Network, on
AnneGaleMAG@aol.com]

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

MAG News Release (19 December) – No change to UK MoT regulations from Europe

The EU Parliament and the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers has – according to FEMA, the Federation of European Motorcyclists Associations – come to a compromise on the Road Worthiness Test (RWT) package and announced that heavy motorcycles will undergo periodic testing inspection from 2022, unless other effective road safety measures are in place.

This basically means that PTI has been referred back to member states to determine their own testing needs. Frédéric George, President of FEMA said: "Those who are happy with their PTI [periodic testing inspection] can keep it the way they want, those who don't want one can keep on exploring other means of improving road safety and respect the will of the citizens."

As far as the UK is concerned, this means that there will be no major change – as we already have RWT in place, in the form of our MoT.

MAG Chairman John Mitchell said: "Our MoT is already stringent enough. A proposal which has been brought in with a lack of objective data (culminating in financial gain for one

country's manufacturer of testing equipment) should not have got this far. As far as MAG's concerned, this is what we wanted – our own government being able to determine its own testing needs. The struggle and campaigning of the past 18 months has been worthwhile.”

MAG NEWS RELEASE

Un-level playing field?

EMBARGO: IMMEDIATE – Noon, 5th January 2014

Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) investigates the case for defending annual Brighton Speed Trials against potential cancellation.

Local motorcycling campaigners MAG have entered the fray over the contentious proposals to ban the Brighton Speed trials. The trials, held in the month of September, are amongst the longest running such events in the United Kingdom. First held in 1905, they have now been threatened with cancellation on the basis of the dangers the festival is said to present to participants and spectators. It is also claimed officials feel that the trials are not particularly good for the local economy, on account of businesses which must remain shut along the promenade while the trials take place.

MAG's Political Officer for the South East, Joe Greening, has been watching the debate closely. 'At first sight, it seems wrong to ban such a long running and traditional part of the annual Brighton sporting calendar. However, we accept that some other factors also need to be taken into account. The safety aspects and financial ones are clearly relevant. But there's actually an underlying reason why all of this is a problem.

'Essentially, the road surface and surrounding infrastructure have been allowed to fall into disrepair, making parts of the viewing areas unsafe for spectators. It's a great pity that so much of Brighton's historical past has been allowed to decay like this – and, in truth, I believe the threat to the trials is a direct result of that. I'm following developments, and at present I tend to feel that, balancing up the factors, the best thing to do is to allow the event to continue, with the Council administering an immediate improvement to the road surface.'

Joe has been recommending that those who feel strongly about the matter should contact members of the committee. 'I think that, by the time this appears in *The Road* (MAG's members' magazine), the decision will have been made. If people would like to know the outcome, they can find out by getting in touch with me. As things stand, it's vexing to see another celebration of motor related sport suffering due to the lack of maintenance which has created a patchy road surface and unsafe buildings. It does make it seem unjust to punish the trials for other people's sins of omission. In a very literal sense, you could say it's the un-level playing field which is at the centre of the problem here.'

MAG's Director of Communications & Public Affairs, Lembit Öpik, has echoed Joe's commentary. 'Joe's taken a very informed look at the issues surrounding the trials. He's totally right to advise local members and others who support the event to make their views known to the committee. Personally, I don't like seeing events like this being lost to a lack of maintenance and cold economic calculations. There are other historic and cultural reasons for this kind of festival. I know Joe and his colleagues will make a lucid and sensible contribution to the debate – and MAG (UK), which takes local decision-making very seriously, is here to support their judgement.'

Contact:

Joe Greening on 01926 844 064

markjgreening7@virginmedia.com

Lembit Öpik on 01926 844 064
public-affairs@mag-uk.org

ETHANOL (E10) IN PETROL

FROM EAST YORKSHIRE

Finally, some good news on the introduction of 10% Ethanol (E10) into Petrol, which was scheduled to be bestowed on us in 2013. A huge thanks to all of you who ...followed the Yorkshire MAG campaign, signed the e-Petition, contacted your MP / Transport Minister and responded to the recent Government consultation. All this campaigning has paid off as the Government has now postponed the E10 introduction until 2016. Whilst undoubtedly good news, this is a postponement and not a cancellation, so the campaign is to stay on the 'back burner' for now, but MAG is watching developments carefully, and as and when required, a new National Campaign will be launched. Watch this Space for developments !!!

If you wish to view the Government document please go to:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/256215/gov-response-motor-fuel.pdf

As you can imagine it is lengthy – 13 pages and not feasible to reproduce here.

From Phil McFadden, South Wales Rep. Nick Baldwin, RIP

Sadly, Nick Baldwin, who was one of the best, passed away suddenly today. He leaves a wife, who is undergoing chemo and young children. Nick went to his GP this a.m. (6 January) as he felt ill and died of a heart attack there. He was someone who everyone liked, always good company. Nick was one in a million, a hardworking gardener who would go out of his way to help others - -even on New Years day, when a 92 year old client called Nick in distress, he went out to sort the problem. A devoted husband to Sian and loving father to his daughters, Nick was a rock to Sian who has been undergoing treatment for cancer. Nick was also a well respected member of Cardiff MAG and successfully helped to organise a charity run last year for a local breast cancer support group, he will be sadly missed by us all .

His family have stated that Nick will be buried in his MAG t shirt as it was a cause held close to his heart . Funeral arrangements will be posted on the Cardiff MAG Facebook page when they have been announced.

SPEED LIMIT REDUCED ON PART OF THE M1 BETWEEN 7AM AND 7PM – A GREEN ISSUE!!

The government is proposing to set up a 60mph speed limit for a 32-mile stretch of the M1, in a bid to cut pollution.

The Highways Agency says the new restriction would apply from 7am to 7pm, seven days a week.

It would be in place from junction 28, near Matlock, Derbyshire, to junction 35a, north of Rotherham.

Variable speed limits are widely used to aid traffic flow, but the RAC said this could be the first time they had been implemented to cut air pollution.

It warned that reducing the maximum speed from the national standard 70mph to 60mph could "pave the way for similar restrictions on other sections of motorway" and there would "inevitably be a negative impact on business efficiency and individual mobility".

In its document, it stated that the current use of the 70mph speed limit for motorways was having "adverse impacts on air quality" and that cutting it would reduce emissions.

RAC technical director David Bizley said: "This is a landmark proposal as to the best of our knowledge motorway speed limits have not previously been lowered in order to comply with environmental legislation."

He added that it "would certainly negate some of the current benefits of operating this section as a 'smart' motorway where motorists are allowed to use the hard shoulder to reduce congestion".

Mr Bizley also said: "More worryingly, it could pave the way for similar restrictions on other sections of motorway. While preserving air quality is obviously a paramount concern there will inevitably be a negative impact on business efficiency and individual mobility.

"This very powerfully demonstrates the impact that speed has on emissions and many will be surprised to hear that a reduction of just 10mph can have such a significant effect on improving air quality."

Tougher European Union guidelines on air quality have come into force and the agency argued that a lower limit would be needed to ensure these were met on the section from junctions 28 and 35a, which goes past Mansfield, Chesterfield and Sheffield.

DVLA

Direct debit and abolition of the tax disc

The government is changing the law in 2014 to reduce tax administration costs and burdens associated with vehicle tax.

The Department for Transport (DfT) made clear in its recent Motoring Services Strategy consultation that the government is committed to offering high quality and cost effective

services to the public and businesses. DfT and **DVLA** have listened to the views of both businesses and the public to remove unnecessary burden and provide modern and efficient services to meet their needs. This includes getting rid of unnecessary paper where possible and making it easier for people and businesses to use government services.

Today (Thursday 5 December 2013), the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the government will change the law in 2014 to reduce tax administration costs and burdens associated with vehicle tax.

DVLA will offer motorists the ability to spread their vehicle tax payments should they wish to do so. From 1 October 2014 motorists will be able to pay vehicle tax by direct debit annually, biannually or monthly. There will be no additional handling fees for annual payments but to limit the impact on the public finances there will be a small surcharge of 5% of vehicle tax for biannual and monthly payments. This is half of the 10% surcharge that is currently applied to 6 monthly tax discs and which has been in existence for a number of decades.

Also from 1 October 2014, the paper tax disc, first issued on 1 January 1921, will no longer be issued and required to be displayed on a vehicle windscreen. Vehicle tax will still need to be paid but with **DVLA** having a digital record of who has and has not paid, a paper tax disc is no longer necessary as proof that vehicle tax is paid. The vast majority of motorists pay their vehicle tax with latest figures confirming that over 99% of motorists' tax their vehicles on time. Most on-road enforcement action is now based on using Automatic Number Plate Readers. These cameras use the number plate rather than a visual inspection of the tax disc. The police also have access to **DVLA** records via the police national computer. There are significant savings for fleet operators and other businesses from not having to handle the administration of tax discs.

DVLA cuts unnecessary red tape for motorists

Motorists will no longer need motor insurance policies to be checked when getting their vehicle tax. The change, announced today by Roads Minister Robert Goodwill, is part of a package of measures to get rid of unnecessary red tape.

The changes, which come into force from 16 December 2013, also mean that motorists will only need to tell **DVLA** once when they declare their vehicle off the road. Currently, motorists who make a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN) have to renew their SORN every year. Last year, around 4 million SORNs were made, with over 1 million of those repeat renewals.

Roads Minister Robert Goodwill said: "We want to make it as easy as possible for motorists to access government services.

"Getting rid of needless bits of paper, making changes to free up motorists' time, while saving money for the taxpayer, is all part of our commitment to get rid of unnecessary red tape."

The changes to insurance checks have been made possible because **DVLA** regularly checks existing databases for insurance under Continuous Insurance Enforcement rules. **DVLA**'s records are compared regularly with the Motor Insurance Database to identify registered keepers of vehicles that have no insurance.

Ashton West, Chief Executive at the Motor Insurers' Bureau (MIB) said:

"Motor insurance remains a legal requirement and these changes recognise the value and importance of the insurance records held centrally on the MID. The introduction of

Continuous Insurance Enforcement in 2011 was always designed to provide a more robust and technology driven solution to ensuring that vehicles have insurance in place. The successful introduction of the new process by the **DVLA** and the MIB has enabled these changes to be made now, which will bring benefits to millions of motorists."

Commenting on the changes to declaring SORN, Geoff Lancaster of the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs said, "**DVLA** are to be congratulated for making sensible use of their technology to maintain their high standards of service while at the same time simplifying life for road users."

1. Motorists must ensure that they have appropriate motor insurance in place.
 2. The Continuous Insurance Enforcement (CIE) scheme to tackle uninsured motorists was launched in June 2011. Under the scheme it is an offence to be the keeper of an uninsured vehicle. Information is cross checked between the Motor Insurance Database (MID) and **DVLA** keeper records.
 3. Under CIE, keepers of vehicles which appear to be uninsured are sent reminder letters. Those who take no action receive a fixed penalty notice of £100, followed by enforcement action - wheelclamping, impounding and ultimately prosecution by the courts (the maximum fine in Court is £1,000).
 4. For the offence of driving without insurance the police can offer a fixed penalty of £200 plus six penalty points, or prosecution (maximum fine of £5,000), discretionary disqualification and mandatory endorsement of between six and eight penalty points. Since 2005 the police have had the power to seize uninsured vehicles. In 2011 they seized 140,000 vehicles.
 5. Drivers and owners can check their vehicle is on the Motor Insurance Database at www.askMID.com.
 6. The removal of the insurance check applies to motorists in GB; the removal of the need to SORN each year applies to all motorists in the UK.
-

MCN reports:

Trail riders' fury as PDNPA vows to continue lane closure policy

The Trail Riders Fellowship is outraged that the cash-strapped Peak District National Park Authority appears determined to continue with its policy of forcing trail bikes out of the park, even though it has had its budget cut by half-a-million pounds.

In 2012-13 the PDNPA budgeted £100,000 on a policy of lane management by closure, and was defeated in the High Court by the Trail Riders Fellowship. It has yet to close a single lane.

Announcing the £577,000 budget cuts, PDNPA chair Tony Favell said: "Our approach to dealing with the cuts is to make efficiency savings in some areas whilst increasing income where we can. We are not standing still, we are being proactive.

"We are investigating the best ways of reducing costs and generating more income from our assets including the North Lees Estate, near Hathersage and from the Monsal, High Peak and Tissington Trails."

TRF communications director Mike Irving said: "It would appear that hard-pressed private businesses operating in the National Park are expected to pick up the tab, so the PDNPA can continue with its 'irrational' (the word used by a High Court Judge) policy of driving motorcyclists and motorists (and the tourist spend that they bring with them) out of the National Park under the misleading tag of 'management'.

"Most of the £100,000 allocated to 'managing' green lanes in last year's budget appears to have been frittered away in internal costs and lawyers expenses. It could have been far better spent on physical improvements to the rights of way network.

"While the TRF is determined to protect the historic rights of motorcyclists by making recourse to the courts whenever necessary, we would much prefer a constructive dialog with the PDNPA and a proactive policy of ensuring that rights of way are maintained to be accessible to all."

The Authority's final budget for 2014-15 will be set at a meeting in February.

Ministry of Justice

Traffic courts up and running in 29 areas

Subject to judicial agreement to list all low-level traffic cases together, dedicated traffic courts are being established across the country. The move will mean low-level traffic offences -such as speeding, traffic-light and document offences - can all be dealt with at one local magistrates' court. In a dedicated traffic court, up to 100 cases can be dealt with in a single session which reduces unnecessary delays and allows local magistrates' courts to focus on more serious offences

These courts have now been successfully established in 29 areas across the country. The government vision is for dedicated 'traffic courts' in all 42 police-force areas.

Justice Minister Damian Green said: The safety of the general public is paramount, and we take road safety very seriously, which is why we have recently increased the sentence for causing serious injury by dangerous driving to 5 years imprisonment.

However, low-level traffic offences such as speeding can take up to 6 months from offence to completion which is a huge drain on the smooth running of the criminal justice system, and takes focus away from more serious offences. This is simply unacceptable. We want all areas to have a dedicated traffic court, and we are on track to reach this target. Traffic courts from West Yorkshire to Sussex have shown how effective and efficient this process can be.

In a traditional court sitting an average of 35 cases may be listed in a day, which could include traffic cases alongside other types of cases such as assault, shop-lifting, and domestic cases among others. A dedicated traffic court, reduces unnecessary delays and allows local magistrates' courts to focus on more serious offences which really make a difference to communities, victims and witnesses.

In West Yorkshire, Bradford has the highest number of uninsured cars in any town in the UK. Every year courts in the region deal with over 1,400 of these types of offences, which could take an average of 6 or 7 months. However since the introduction of traffic courts, together with the use of a civilian document checker, these cases now take an average of 4 months, and a higher proportion of cases are resolved at first hearing, meaning that courts have

more time to deal with more serious cases. Together with police-led prosecutions, this means that prosecutors are able to focus their resources on more serious cases, providing efficient justice for victims and witnesses.

Criminal justice agencies are being encouraged to work together so that traffic courts are rolled out across all areas by April 2014.

The roll-out of traffic courts feeds into the Strategy and Action Plan, which was launched in June this year to help speed up the justice process through a range of actions including, the digitalisation of the courts process, easier access for victims and witnesses to give evidence in court, and a more transparent and responsive criminal justice system.

Government's U-Turn on Young Driver Safety

Once again, the safety of young drivers has been kicked into the back seat, with a long-promised consultation paper – due before the end of 2013 – postponed indefinitely. PACTS Executive Director David Davies said: “Ministers have today (19 December) admitted that they are renegeing on their repeated commitments to publish a consultation paper on young driver safety this year. It looks like a clear case of putting politics before the safety of young people, giving the general election priority over saving lives. PACTS is dismayed that the government is not prepared even to consult on such a vital issue.”

Almost a quarter of the road crashes resulting in death or serious injury in 2012 involved a driver under 24. TRL research, commissioned by the Government, found that a graduated approach to young driver licensing could prevent 230 deaths and save £224 million a year. Young, newly-qualified drivers are disproportionately involved in crashes, particularly catastrophic crashes involving multiple passengers. This has driven up insurance premiums for young drivers.

- Young drivers themselves know that they engage in risky and even illegal behaviours, with more than average reporting that they drive too fast for the conditions or text while driving – and see this behaviour among their peers.
- New drivers know that they need to improve their skills, with 95% acknowledging the need for at least some improvement. This is more commonly reported by females.

David Davies continued: “This issue has been left in the ‘too difficult’ pile for too long. The general public, parents of teenagers and most young people themselves believe the current testing and licensing do not prepare young people to drive safely. The system needs courageous leadership and overhaul, as countries such as those already carried out in Australia and Canada.

“Successive governments have not managed to resolve the risks for young drivers and their passengers in the period immediately after passing the test. As well as the disproportionate safety risks, many young people are now excluded from driving because of high insurance premiums which reflect the level of catastrophic crashes.

“Disappointingly, this government appears to have the same weak resolve.

“The Transport Select Committee has called for action to improve young driver safety and PACTS will be inviting the Committee to question the Government over its lack of progress.”

The information was provided by Transport minister Robert Goodwill in a written answer to Richard Burden MP on 19th December: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm131218/text/131218w0001.htm#131218w0001.htm_wqn15

PACTS briefing notes:

<http://www.pacts.org.uk/2013/04/getting-young-drivers-back-on-the-roads-in-safety/>
<http://www.pacts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/GDL-Pr-Mem-briefing-25Oct131.pdf>

FEMA

Reasonable compromise reached on EU technical inspection schemes for motorcycles.

On December 18, the Lithuanian Presidency announced agreement with the Parliament on the controversial road worthiness package. Millions of powered two-wheeler (PTW) users in Europe see the spectre of harmonized periodical inspections fading away

Member States and Parliament finally reached agreement on the road worthiness testing package under the Lithuanian Presidency: the heavy motorcycles will be subject to periodic roadworthiness tests from 2022. However, Member States may exclude these vehicles from testing if they have put in place alternative effective road safety measures, taking into account in particular road safety statistics of the 5 years. If heavy motorcycles are included in the scope of periodic roadworthiness testing, specific testing methods, inspection areas and frequency are decided at the Member State level.

FEMA, the Federation of European Motorcyclists' Associations, welcomes the compromise reached, and happily notes that common sense has prevailed in the end despite heavy corporate lobby from the testing industry. FEMA has heavily criticised the Commission's proposal to harmonise periodical technical inspections for L-category as useless and expensive while based on a testing industry biased impact assessment.