



April 2016  
Network

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

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Please submit copy for the May edition by 25<sup>th</sup> April to [aine@mag-uk.org](mailto:aine@mag-uk.org). Subject heading: Network.

## Editorial

Having just returned from Western Region's first MAG Hatters Rally, which was an enormous success despite Storm Katie's best efforts & thanks to a brilliant team, this editorial is going to be very short.

Further on there are two articles on potholes and the state of our roads. We haven't had a particularly hard winter in my neck of the woods but the roads are in a terrible state. Major potholes everywhere. I noticed on the trike you tend to pick up every pothole, dodgy surface. However, en route back from Gloucester in the car one day on the A38 – a somewhat major road - the surface is disgraceful.

Council's don't seem to bother. The amount we pay in road tax and tax on fuel you'd think the powers that be would want to make more of an effort wherein our roads are concerned. I travelled a lot in Eastern Europe some years back and their roads were in better condition than ours are now. It seems road users pay more and more only to get less and less.

Hope to see you all at Group Conference. Ride free, AG

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**[Acknowledgments: George Legg. Selina Lavendar. Leon & Lembit. Anyone else I've forgotten]**

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## Chair communications

Just a few things to make you aware of:

**AGC** – Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2016, start time 12:00 noon, location Shaw Lane Rugby Club, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 6HZ (drinks and lunch will be available prior to the start of the meeting).

**London MAG is back** – Tim Fawthrop is heading up London MAG. You can contact Tim via [tim.fawthrop@mag-uk.org](mailto:tim.fawthrop@mag-uk.org) the next meeting is the Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> of April. Tim will be posting regularly on Facebook and meetings will be put on the main MAG website. (*See article further on, Ed*).

**Northern Ireland** – Paul Wilson is heading up MAG in Northern Ireland. You can contact Paul via [paul.wilson@mag-uk.org](mailto:paul.wilson@mag-uk.org) to offer help and support.

**MAG Wiki page** – thanks to the efforts of Andy Meredith we have a MAG Wiki which is a place to share MAG documentation, you don't need a login for the wiki. Access it via <https://wiki.mag-uk.org>

**MAG letter templates** – New Word letter templates are available via your Regional Rep, please email them for a copy. We are hoping to make these easily accessible to you in the near future via the wiki.

**New Membership and DD forms** – these have been put up on the wiki (in Toolbox) for you to download to print (these have the office address rather than the P.O. Box). Can anyone running a stand make sure they print the new version and destroy any older forms. NOTE: if you are in possession of the carbon copy pads please continue to use these.

**Event and rally posters** – some are available on the wiki (in Resources). If you don't see your poster there then please contact your Regional Rep who has access to upload to the wiki.

**MAG P.O. Box** – Please start using our physical office address in place of the P.O. Box.

MAG, Unit C13, Holly Farm Business , Honiley, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 1NP

Feel free to get in touch via your Regional Rep or directly with me via [chair@mag-uk.org](mailto:chair@mag-uk.org)

I look forward to seeing many of you at AGC.

Selina. MAG National Chair

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#### **MAG PRESS RELEASES**

MOTORCYCLISTS SHOULD be allowed to use every bus lane in London, and Transport for London should recognise the role motorbikes can play in easing congestion, the London Assembly transport committee said this week.

The assembly says motorcycles could be part of the solution to the capital's congestion, particularly if more journeys by commercial vehicles can be undertaken by them. Motorcycles could be used for parcels deliveries, or by trades people to visit worksites.

To read the complete article, written by Andrew Forster and recently published in Local Transport Today, the UK's leading journal on transport policy and planning, please follow the link <http://www.mag-uk.org/files/LTT692page4.pdf>

*And*

David Williams writes in the Evening Standard;

It's crunch time for motorcycling in London, with its viability as a form of transport hanging in the balance. Last week, three issues threw it into focus; the announcement of Transport for London's Urban Motorcycle Design Handbook and its pilot novice motorcycle rider training scheme, and the London Assembly attacking TfL for failing to do enough for motorcyclists' safety.

To read the full article, please follow the link <http://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/motors/david-williams-tfl-needs-to-up-its-game-on-bikers-safety-a3200901.html>.

Below is a letter written in response to the article from Chair of MAG, Selina Lavender;

Dear Sir,

I was very impressed by David Williams' well observed and logical analysis of the contradictions in London traffic policy (Evening Standard, 10th March, page 57). As he points out, cyclists are enjoying investment of almost one billion Pounds on road schemes.

The budget for motorcyclists – who share a roughly equivalent accident injury and mortality rate – is zero. The Motorcycle Action Group has long argued for a more common sense approach to these matters, and parity of treatment for all 'vulnerable road users.' We're not anti-cycling, but we are anti-road schemes which absorb vast tracts of road space to create largely empty cycle lanes at the cost of motorcyclists' safety – and lives.

Credit is due to Valerie Shawcross and her committee for taking a serious and measured look at the issues affecting bikers – who ride machines which reduce congestion, travel time and pollution – and to the Evening Standard for giving space to contradictions which have long vexed the riding community. We only hope that TfL will now demonstrate the same level of common sense as Ms Shawcross and the Evening Standard.

Selina Lavender  
Chair, Motorcycle Action Group

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### **Leon and Lembit's Bits**

1. Work by MAG has led to two key documents being published that have huge potential for use by all activists to push for much better treatment of bikers and biking across the UK. And although both publications come from London they have high potential to influence policy nationwide.

The first is the long awaited 'Urban Motorcycle Handbook' that Leon has been pushing TfL to commission and publish for over three years. An article about it is in the forthcoming issue of the ROAD. In essence the booklet is free to download and is for all road scheme designers – and it has the simple but crucial aim of enabling and encouraging them to consider bikers a great deal more than most do right now. The objective is to stop them designing schemes that make riding more hazardous and less convenient. <http://is.gd/b3zsrV>

2. The second, document is a report from the London Assembly that MAG made a great deal of input to on a formal and informal basis. It publishes the results of a Public Inquiry type investigation into the positive and negative impacts of TfL's policies on the interests and safety of bikers. Leon supplied a lot of background material and represented MAG at the public meeting which can be seen here: <http://is.gd/G5wOPH>

That formal input was followed by Lembit securing an informal meeting for L&L with Val Shawcross, Chair of the Assembly Transport committee and her researcher who was drafting the final report. That meeting improved understanding of the points that MAG had made and led to the Chair expressing an interest in the launch of the report including a photo opportunity for the press of her on a scooter – that Leon gladly arranged through some of his contacts with manufacturers and retailers.

The report contained a lot more criticism than praise making the title of it somewhat ironic.

'Easy rider: Improving motorcycle safety on London's roads' <http://is.gd/MaM5ro>

Positive outcomes from the report include a clear statement that motorbike access to bus lanes is such a good idea that it should be spread to all of them.

Other outcomes that are good for our cause are various serious criticisms including grave concern about inadequate levels of consideration of bikers and biking – and huge gaps between the allocation of resources to help cyclists in contrast to motorcyclists. Sounds familiar..?

"These two documents really are powerful tools for all MAG activists to use in triggering fresh bursts of progress across the UK. They both say it how it *really* is for bikers and the unacceptable trends for our rights and interests to be ignored", says Leon.

Meanwhile,

3. Lembit and Ian Mutch were present at the Ace Cafe to witness the rebirth of MAG in London.

4 A big shout out to Finbar who's done a fantastic job of organising a massive event in Salisbury centre on Sunday 17th April. Last year there were 7,000 bikers in the town, alarming the local authorities. This year, we've crossed all the T's and dotted the I's - and everyone is on board. Finbar also arranged a great training event for stewards. 'It's a classic example of MAG at its active best. The only thing we haven't organised is the weather, but I predict sunshine.'

5. Lembit visited Northern Ireland to engage with the transport Minister, Mark H Durkan, on rider related issues. While there, he also spoke with all the main parties standing in the Assembly elections, accompanied on the trip by Northern Ireland contact, Tim Fawthrop. 'We covered the bases,' says Lembit, 'and once the elections are over, we'll sit down with the newly appointed Transport Committee and start a dialogue from apposition of information. The Northern Ireland Assembly has a lot of legislative power and we've got to be partners there.'

6 Leon has continued to support to MAG reps behind the scenes who are engaging with local authorities. 'The level of energy and investment in the relationships with local authorities is delivering some very significant results' he says. Adding that you'll be able to read about one of these in the ROAD, in an article entitled The Three Amigos. It's a case study in convincing local authorities to play ball with bikers.' If you'd like to campaign on bus lanes, road hazards, bike parking or any other local issues, get in touch with Leon or Lembit and they'll be delighted to help out.

7 In the London Mayoral elections, realistically there are only two potential winners; Sadiq Khan (Labour) and Zac Goldsmith (Conservative). Leon managed to have an informal chat with Sadiq at a social event and a lengthy conversation that was scheduled with the Political Director of Zac Goldsmith's campaign. Sadiq and the Political Director both said they would get their policy strategy teams focused on the simple but crucial fact that motorcyclists are voters – and there are around 130,000 in London.

Meanwhile, Lembit secured a commitment from all five parties in the running, that the newly elected Mayor will meet with MAG to discuss riders' priorities in the capital.

'These steps are a key advance,' says Lembit, 'as we'll be in a far stronger position to be at the table when transport decisions are made in the city. In the past, we've been running to keep up, but that's changing.'

8 Lembit is heading to Scotland on 13th April to support MAG Scotland's election debate hustings. Last year's General Election event went very well and Steve Wykes is hard at it getting the parties organised again. Details available from Steve Wykes, Lembit and HQ. Please come.

**MAG Scotland Hustings Your chance to quiz Candidates from all the main political parties on their policies for biking. All welcome**

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 7:30pm for 8:00pm start**

**Venue [The Hall Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace Edinburgh EH1 2JL](#)**

9. Leon is also heading to Scotland to make a presentation to the Edinburgh Transport Forum. The talk will essentially be based on MAG's Five Pathways for Progress and the opportunity to address this body follows the tireless and highly productive work of Steve Wykes, our long standing Scotland Rep and MAG Director.

As ever, L&L encourage you to join the increasing number of bikers who have got in touch with your local politicians to ask for the things we need. Whether it's more secure parking or access to bus lanes, it's up to us to make ourselves heard. Make sure you're part of the voice of biking in the UK.

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## **Redefining Potholes!!! Could this be coming to a Council near you?**

*This was reported in the Scottish Daily Mail on 9<sup>th</sup> March*

**When is a pothole not a pothole? When it's not 2ft wide and 2.3in deep, says council as it changes the rules to cut repair bill**

- Perth and Kinross Council has officially redefined what a pothole is
- Pits must now be 2.4in deep before the local authority will repair them
- Council hopes it will be save £120,000 through the cost-cutting policy
- Comes as report reveals half of AA members in Scotland have suffered damage to their vehicles from bad roads

It may look like a pothole, and if you drive through it, it will feel like a pothole.

But in one council area there is every chance that the hole in the road that wrecks your car will no longer be classed as such.

That is because Perth and Kinross Council has officially redefined what a pothole is, in order to cut its road repairs budget.

In a bizarre money-saving move, it has declared potholes must now be 60mm (2.4in) deep – 50 per cent more than previously – before the council considers filling them.

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The news comes as a report due this week will reveal that nearly half of AA members in Scotland have suffered damage to their vehicles from bad roads.

When setting its budget for 2016-17, Perth and Kinross Council agreed not to fill a hole until it reaches a depth of 60mm – despite the fact a wet winter has left local roads riddled with potholes. The previous minimum depth was 40mm (1.6in).

The council hopes it will be able to save £120,000 through the cost-cutting policy, but inevitably the decision has angered road users.

Robert Noble from Crieff said: 'When I moved to Perth and Kinross in 1971, the Perthshire roads were maintained to a high standard and the off-lets were cleaned regularly.

'Now there appears to be a 'could not care less' attitude within the council.'

Kinross-shire Liberal Democrat Councillor Willie Robertson said: 'The anticipated 'saving' is given as £120,000.

'As a cyclist I know that damaged road drains are a real danger. You can't avoid them because of traffic passing you.

'I am also aware of a few people locally who have damaged their cars on potholes recently.

'I wonder what the cost will ultimately be when people claim for compensation from the council for the cost of repairing their vehicles.'

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The council's decision comes as a report to be released this week will show that 46 per cent of Scots AA members have suffered damage to their vehicles after they have driven over a pothole. The report reveals that Scotland is the worst place in the UK for pothole-related damage.

Between 2009 and 2014, Scottish councils forked out a whopping £2.7million to people whose cars had been damaged by unrepaired potholes – at a cost of £1,600 a day.

However, as the new figures show, cars are still being damaged by these nuisance holes. And it is not just cars that are being knocked about on pock-marked roads.

In response to a parliamentary question in the House of Commons in January, Tory MP Andrew Jones estimated that 211 cyclists had been killed in the UK as a result of defective road surfaces between 2010 and 2011.

In 2011, experienced cyclist Martyn Uzzell, 51, was killed in North Yorkshire during a cycle from Land's End to John O'Groats, when he went over a four-inch-deep pothole that had been inspected and ignored by the local council only a month before.

If a cyclist hits one, they could be looking at a trip to the hospital or, worse, the morgue. Sam Jones, campaign director at CTC, the national cycling charity

Now, frustration about potholes is growing.

Neil Greig, of the Institute of Advanced Motorists, said: 'I have been getting a lot of calls about the issue, from road users all over Scotland.

'Although we haven't had a particularly cold, frosty winter, we have had a long period of wet, windy weather. It's had a really bad effect on our roads. Till we get a long-term plan going to get this issue sorted, it will come back each winter.'

Sam Jones, campaign director at CTC, the national cycling charity, said: 'If a car hits a pothole, the owner may need to visit the garage.

'If a cyclist hits one, they could be looking at a trip to the hospital or, worse, the morgue.

'It is one of the most reported problems among cyclists. Potholes are one of the greatest dangers on the roads.'

Simon Williams, a spokesman for the RAC, said: 'Motorists in Scotland cited the poor condition of local roads as their single biggest cause of concern in the annual survey conducted for the RAC Report on Motoring. Action needs to be taken.

'We need whole stretches of road to be resurfaced regularly rather than just patching them when they start to fall apart, costing taxpayers more and more money every year.'

A spokesman for Perth and Kinross Council said: 'To ensure safety, we will continue to undertake repairs in inherently dangerous circumstances as part of a risk-assessment approach.'

### ***And talking of the state of our roads:-***

#### **Survey paints 'unsettling picture' of England and Wales' road networks**

The results of a new survey suggest the 'one-time cost' to get roads in England and Wales back into reasonable condition is now £11.8bn.



The Asphalt Industry Alliance's (AIA) Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) survey for 2016 estimates that 13% of England's road network (excluding London) is in poor structural condition, compared to 12% in London and 6% in Wales.

The report also says the length of time it will take to clear the carriageway maintenance backlog is 14 years, a year longer than predicted in the 2015 report.

Each year the AIA commissions the survey of highways departments in all local authorities in England and Wales to build a picture of the general condition of local roads.

It says the 2016 survey paints 'an unsettling picture' and indicates that 'further decline lies ahead for our local roads'.

The survey highlights that in England (excluding London) during 2015/16, the average local authority highway maintenance budget saw a 16% year-on-year decrease - from £23.4m to £19.8m. However, the figures for London and Wales both rose; London up 20% to £9m and Wales up to £7.8m from £7m.

The report also estimates that the total shortfall in annual carriageway maintenance budget is £791m, an average of £4.6m per authority.

The RAC has described the findings as disappointing but not surprising.

David Bizley, RAC chief engineer, said: "While around £1bn a year has been allocated by central government for local roads in England between now and 2020, their condition appears to be getting worse rather than better.

"It's time for the Government to recognise that local roads are a vital part of the transport infrastructure which should be brought into the scope of the Infrastructure Commission so that they are rightly treated as a long-term strategic asset.

"While the Government's Road Investment Strategy is ensuring the future 'fitness-for-purpose' of the strategic road network in England there is a very real danger that local roads will suffer ongoing decline through insufficient investment and no long-term strategy to improve them.

"What use would it be having excellent motorways, major roads, railways, ports and airports if, when getting to or from them, you are faced with pothole-ridden, crumbling local roads where, of course, all journeys start and finish?"

- See more at:

Survey Results: <http://www.asphaltindustryalliance.com/alarm-survey.asp>

ALARM:

[http://www.asphaltindustryalliance.com/images/library/files/ALARM%202016/ALARM\\_survey\\_2016\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://www.asphaltindustryalliance.com/images/library/files/ALARM%202016/ALARM_survey_2016_full_report.pdf)

RAC: [http://www.rac.co.uk/press-centre#/news/rac-reacts-to-asphalt-industry-alliance-s-annual-local-authority-road-maintenance-alarm-survey-156909?utm\\_campaign=Subscription](http://www.rac.co.uk/press-centre#/news/rac-reacts-to-asphalt-industry-alliance-s-annual-local-authority-road-maintenance-alarm-survey-156909?utm_campaign=Subscription)

## AROUND GB

### LONDON RISING (Brilliant News)



**'MAG made a capital breakthrough in March with the establishment of a London Branch for the first time in many years.**

The motive force behind this was Tim Fawthrop - who organised the inaugural meeting at the Ace Cafe. Enough people attended to open up the possibility of not one, but two branches in the city. Lembit and President Mutch also attended this energetic event. Ian said afterwards; "I've always felt we really do need an active group in the country's capital. Tim Fawthrop's efforts mean we've now got one. My thanks to the Ace for hosting our event, for the tea and for an enormous portion of ribs which ultimately defeated my modest, West Country appetite.' Lembit is following up the meeting with Tim to explore logistics for a centrally based venue to compliment the meetings which are also likely to take place regularly at the Ace cafe.' Mutch/Lembit.

### **Welsh Government funds motorcyclist safety projects**

Two projects which aim to reduce the number of motorcycle casualties will share up to £450,000 of Welsh Government funding.

Announced by Edwina Hart, the Welsh Government's economy and transport minister, the funding comes as part of phase two of the Small Business Research Initiative\* (SBRi).

The two projects come from an original shortlist of 47 applications and focus on helmet lining and a junction alert system.

The advanced helmet liner is being created by Armourgel Ltd, and will incorporate Armourgel material with the aim of protecting motorcyclists from rotational acceleration brain injuries.

The junction alert system is a Fusion Processing Ltd design. It will use a combination of radar and cameras to identify when a motorcyclist is approaching.

Announcing the successful projects, Mrs Hart said: “Welsh roads are amongst the safest in the world, however we continue to strive for improvements and reducing the number of motorcyclist casualties is one of our priorities.

“These projects are looking at innovative ways to protect motorcyclists and reduce accidents. Both successful products returned encouraging results at feasibility stage and I am pleased we are able to support them to develop their products further.”

\*Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI)

The SBRI challenges companies to identify pioneering approaches to reduce motorcyclist casualties in Wales – a priority road safety target for the Welsh Government.

In July of last year Ms Hart announced the four successful projects under the first stage of the initiative. The funding they received helped them to run feasibility studies as part of the first phase of the challenge.

The four projects were then invited to bid for funding for phase 2 of the initiative, which will help develop the products to point where they can be marketed.

- See more at: <http://gov.wales/newsroom/businessandconomy/2016/160224-motorcyclist-casualties/?status=-ima%252525252525253F&lang=en>

-: <https://sbri.innovateuk.org/>

### **MAG is Gearing up for the Scottish Election**

MAG Scotland is organising a hustings event chaired by our Director of Communication and Public Affairs Lembit Opik on Wednesday 13th April 2016 7.30pm for 8pm till 9.30pm

Your chance to quiz representatives of all the main political Parties on their policies for biking. All welcome

Location: The Hall Quaker Meeting House. 7 Victoria Terrace Edinburgh EH1 2JL

Contact Steve Wykes 07904203343 or e-mail [edinburghmag@aol.com](mailto:edinburghmag@aol.com)

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### **Bikers urged to take it easy as figures show rise in serious accidents**

A new campaign has been launched on the back of figures which show that almost 2,500 motorcyclists have been killed or injured in the north east of England over the past five years.

Published by Road Safety GB North East, the figures show that between 2011 and 2015, 52 bikers were killed and 771 seriously injured. They also reveal that in 2015 there was a 13% rise in ‘the most serious accidents’, with 15 people killed.

Stats also show that motorcyclists are 38 times more likely to be killed in a road collision than car drivers.

The figures were released as Road Safety GB NE launched its 'Look out for each other' campaign, urging motorcyclists to slow down and anticipate the mistakes of other road users.

The campaign features the story of Paul and Kathleen Grieves' (video below), highlighting their experiences following a serious bike accident.

It was launched ahead of the Easter weekend when traditionally more riders take to the roads in the north east and across the rest of the UK. Road Safety GB NE has also published a video showing a cross route guide of the A689 Wolsingham to Killhope (top). Paul Watson, Road Safety GB NE chairman, said: "It's the time of year when bikers like to get their machines out and tour around the region, so understandably we tend to see a sharp rise in accidents involving motorcyclists between March and October.

"Failure to look properly is a factor in almost half of the accidents involving bikes and quite often riders simply lose control of their vehicles.

"We are not here to tell people not to ride motorbikes – we appreciate it's a much-loved pastime for a lot of people. However, we do want people to take it easy and to make sure they have the skills and experience required for riding the larger bikes."

- See more at: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/4974.html#sthash.PAJZhkG5.dpuf>

Videos: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/4974.html>

*And.....on the same subject:*

### **THINK! 2016 motorcycle campaign targets 'male hobbyist' riders**

THINK! has launched its 2016 motorcycle campaign in a bid to improve the safety of the 'most at-risk user group' on Britain's roads.

The campaign will run between March and September and will be social media driven. Its core target audience is 'male hobbyist' riders aged 30-59 years.

The campaign will run from the THINK! BIKER Facebook page and will launch with a series of promoted Facebook posts over the Easter weekend.

The campaign will set out to encourage riders to complete advanced training, wear the correct protective gear and reduce their speeds on country roads. It also reminds drivers to look out for motorcycles at junctions.

Motorcyclists account for a tiny percentage of road traffic in Great Britain (1% in 2014) but are the most at-risk user group. In 2014, there were 339 fatalities and 5,289 seriously injured casualties.

THINK! is targeting the 30-59 years category because in 2014 some 59% of all motorcyclist fatalities were in this age range. Male hobbyist riders tend to be engaged with the motorcycling community and as such can be easily reached through social media channels.

The campaign will reuse existing content including the 'Never Too Good' series of videos, featuring superbike racer Chaz Davies and comedian Alan Davies, and the 'Perfect Day' film (featured above).

A campaign toolkit for road safety officers can be downloaded from the members' area of this website.

- See more at: <https://www.facebook.com/THINKBIKER/?ref=hl>  
Never to Good: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRwuankoCQ0>

Similarly:.....

## **Ride smarter this year: GEM calls for motorcycle skills boost**

Posted on February 29th, 2016 by GEM Motoring Assist

Motorcyclist

ROAD SAFETY and breakdown organisation GEM Motoring Assist is keen to ensure motorcyclists put safety first on rides this season. Central to this, according to GEM, is a focus on rider skill.

There were 5,558 serious accidents involving motorcyclists in 2014. In all, 339 motorcyclists were killed in reported road accidents – an increase of 2.4% on 2013. Additionally, 5,289 riders were seriously injured, an increase of 8.7% on 2013, and the highest level since 2009. The majority of motorcycling collisions occurred at junctions.

GEM chief executive David Williams MBE comments: “There’s a lot of satisfaction to be gained from riding a motorcycle with skill and precision. That’s why we’re encouraging riders to give themselves a ‘skills MOT’ at the start of this season; this will help ensure they reduce the risks they face on journeys.”

Follow GEM’s five simple ‘lifesaver’ safety tips and reduce the risk of being involved in a collision:

- If you’ve had your bike in the garage for the winter, use the start of the riding season to invest in a refresher day with a training professional. Search online for motorcycle training days or consult your local club or advanced motorcyclists’ group.
- Make sure you take time to warm up, especially if you are not a regular rider and not ‘bike fit’.
- Ensure self-preservation is your priority. The predominant cause of motorcycle crashes is the failure of car drivers to detect and recognise motorcycles in traffic. So wear high visibility clothing on all journeys, and ride in a way that gives others a better chance of seeing you.
- Don’t ride beyond your comfort zone, especially if you’re riding in a group. If your friends are cornering too quickly for you, let them go and join them at the next junction.
- Try not to dwell on your errors as you go along. Plan 10 to 15 seconds ahead, anticipate the next hazards. When you stop for a break, reflect on anything that didn’t go to plan, ask what you have learnt and how you can reduce the chance of the same thing happening again.

-: <http://www.motoringassist.com/motoring-advice/news/ride-smarter-this-year-gem-calls-for-motorcycle-skills-boost/>

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**Electric bicycles and mopeds: there are no 'grey areas'**

2nd March 2016. Joint release from the MCIA and Bicycle Association.

The Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA) and the Bicycle Association of Great Britain (BA) are concerned that some sellers are unaware of, or ignoring, the rules surrounding high powered electric bicycles.

Both associations are fielding enquiries regarding the exploitation of a 'grey area', whereby high powered bikes are bought for 'off-road use', in the mistaken belief that this makes them exempt from existing rules.

In order for an electric bike to enjoy the same rights as an ordinary pedal cycle, it should have working pedals, not exceed 250 Watts and the electrical assistance should cut out when the bike reaches 15.5mph.

In the UK, an electric bike over 250W is legally classified as a moped if it is to be ridden on the road. mopeds must be 'type approved', registered, taxed, insured and have an MOT. The rider must have the appropriate licence/training and wear a helmet.

If an electric bike over 250W is intended for off-road use in the UK, then it must comply with the same rules which apply to off-road motorcycles. That means riders are barred from using public roads, common land, paths or tracks intended for cyclists and must be registered on an agreed list for off-road competition bikes, known as the FIM competition list, or EC Type Examined.

MCIA and BA would also remind anyone who owns or is selling an e-bike that it makes no difference if the machine has a switch to flick between a higher and lower power setting. The higher power rating is the rating that the bike needs to be classified by.

Steve Garidis, Operations Director of the BA, said:

"The vast majority of the industry understands its obligations and is highly professional in the way it sells electric bicycles, but it's vital all sellers understand there is really no 'grey area' when it comes to when an electric bicycle must be treated as a moped. 'Speed pedelecs' for example, a category of faster e-bike becoming popular in Germany and other countries, are categorised as mopeds in the UK. They have motors more powerful than 250W and offer power assist to a higher speed than 25km/h (15.5mph). Unlike in Germany, there are no regulations which exempt speed pedelecs from any of the standard moped requirements in the UK, so the machine must be type approved, registered, taxed, insured; the rider must have a suitable licence and wear a full motorbike helmet, and be over 16."

Dave Luscombe, MCIA's Project Manager for Alternative Powered Vehicles, explained the situation for off-road use:

"Telling someone they are 'okay on private land' is seriously misleading, unless you make them understand they probably need to own the land themselves. High powered off-road electric bikes currently fall within rules meant for off-road motorcycle sport. That means they can't access areas where, for example, motocross machines are barred. They can't use public roads, common land or any trails or paths intended for bicycles. They must be EC Type Examined or registered on the FIM competition list, which is a list agreed by all EU manufacturers for bikes used in off-road sport. Dealers must make the restricted access very clear to people who may believe they can use cycle trails."

To recap:

For an e-bike to be treated legally as a bicycle in the UK it must be 250W or less, must have pedals and the power assistance must cut out at 15.5mph. Anything else is treated in law as a moped.

Speed pedelecs are currently treated in UK law as mopeds, with no exemptions from moped requirements.

Anything over 250W and intended for off-road use is classified as a motocross machine, must be EC Type Examined, or on the FIM competition list and can only go where regular motocross bikes are legally permitted to go.

The most recent guidance notes from the Department for Transport on electric bikes are available at: <http://tinyurl.com/zxvka5p>

### **Electric mopeds**

When intended for road use, an electric bicycle or speed pedelec over 250W and not over 4kW is classified as a moped (L1e-A or L1e-B). Speed pedelecs fall into the L1e-B category. That means any such vehicles must meet all the requirements that a moped and moped rider need to comply with:

- Be 16 years of age or over
- Have a moped entitlement on car license or a valid CBT
- Wear a helmet
- Fix 'L' plates if appropriate
- The rider needs insurance, road tax and an MOT

E-bikes over 4kW intended for road use are motorcycles and must comply with the rules which apply to motorcycles of a similar output.

\*Type approval

Machines over 250W intended for on road use need to be 'type approved' and registered for the road. It doesn't matter how briefly a rider will be on the public road, an e-bike over 250W is a moped and needs to be registered as such.

Type approval is now also required for the sale of new e-bikes with a "Twist and Go" throttle (i.e. the motor can operate up to 15.5mph without the rider pedalling) but which are otherwise below the 250W rated power and 15.5mph assist speed limits. Like other e-bikes in use, these machines are still treated in UK law as bicycles, except that the rider must be 14 or over.

Websites: [www.mcia.co.uk](http://www.mcia.co.uk). [www.bicycleassociation.org.uk](http://www.bicycleassociation.org.uk)

**Also,**

The Institute of Couriers presented Karen Cole with an award for her contribution to rider safety

Most riders won't have heard of Karen Cole, but as Director of Safety and Training at the Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA), she has been quietly beaver away on your behalf to improve rider safety.

She started working for the MCIA 15 years ago, during which time motorcycle casualties have fallen significantly. She works with a talented team of riders, all equally passionate about motorcycle safety, whose work has been recognised with 3 awards in the past 12 months!

"Safe riding starts with good training", says Karen, who has led her team in setting up a framework to measure and signpost high quality training, through the Motorcycle Industry Accreditation Centre (MCIAC).

"If you've ever looked for a trainer yourself", she adds, "You will know that 'word of mouth' used to be the only way of gaining a recommendation. All that will change as more schools become MCIAC Accredited."

[MCIAC](#) takes the hard work out of finding a good training school. All the schools which gain Accreditation are inspected annually and every single customer is surveyed after their training. This means standards are kept high. More training schools are seeking to become MCIAC Accredited each month, which will give more people the chance to learn with an Accredited school.

Karen is also one of the authors of a [landmark policy document](#), jointly written by the MCIA and the National Police Chiefs' Council, which explores the idea that encouraging motorcycling will result in safer road users. This [draws on information](#) which shows countries with a higher percentage of motorcyclists, have a lower rate of accidents.

<http://www.geton.co.uk/meet-woman-works-improve-motorcycle-safety/>

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