



February 2016 Network

A networking tool for Activists and other interested parties

Editorial	2
FEMA – protective Clothing PR.	2-3
Leon and Lembit's Bits	3-4
A 'thank you' letter from Alison Reeves-Guy - Aimed at "you".	4-5
MAG MEDIA NEEDS YOU. Your Chairman – 'MAG welcomes the good news that sales of commuter bikes and ptws in general are on the rise.' Money for Nothing – El Presidente speaks.	5-6
Wales shares! FEMA creates link for motorcycle recalls. GEM calls for compulsory eyesight testing for all drivers	6-8
IAM calls for crackdown on persistent offenders.	8-9
AROUND GB:- 20mph plans move forward in Chester and Edinburgh. Northern Ireland's new Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill. Cambridge.	9-11
Report highlights concerns over distracting technology. Bill calls for tougher penalties for criminal driving offences and better treatment for victims.	11-12
Report reveals Google's self-driving crash data. Removing traffic lights would 'boost economy and road safety'. IAM's calls for increased investment in roads finally answered, as councils spend more on road projects.	13-16
Motorcycling in France. Spanish Tour Offer.	16-19
Contacts	19-20

Editorial

Unusually I'm leading with the FEMA PR on the new EU standards for protective clothing. Although this new regulation does not mean that riders are obliged to wear only approved clothing and the regulation is about selling approved protective clothing and not about wearing it I find this extremely worrying and I don't expect I'm the only one.

We've seen this sort of thing before – EU standards – not mandatory – and then the next thing you know compulsion has been sneaked in through the back door.

Noting Dolf's assurance FEMA will be keeping an eye out for anything resembling compulsory wearing only of motorcycle gear conforming to this PPE regulation its my view we all have to remain extremely vigilant.

Towards the end of this edition I've included an article entitled: **Removing traffic lights would 'boost economy and road safety'** – this being the conclusion of a report from the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), which says that an 'alternative approach' - shared space - can improve road safety without the 'colossal costs' associated with traffic lights. I'm afraid to say I can't see this working.

We all meet nutters everyday on the road – can you imagine those road users showing consideration to others? Maybe I'm just cynical, however, I can't.

I had a little snigger at the article about Google self driving cars. Apparently, drivers of Google's self-driving car had to intervene 13 times between September 2014 and November 2015 in order to stop the vehicle from crashing. Now who saw that coming?

See you all again for the March edition. Meanwhile, ride safe and free, AG.

Copy for the next edition to aine@mag-uk.org by 25th February please

[Acknowledgments: George Legg. Leon & Lembit – (Team Double L). Selina Lavender. Jane Carrott. And anyone else I've forgotten]

FEMA

On January 20th the EU The European Parliament decided today that motorcycle gear is protective clothing that will have to meet European standards.

Until now only protective (motorcycle) gloves, boots and impact protectors were seen as protective gear and had to meet certain standards. Today the European parliament decided to include all motorcycle gear in the new protective personal equipment (PPE) regulation.

This means, that in a few years' time all motorcycle gear that is sold in Europe has to meet the same safety standards. They will have to provide a minimum amount of protection against abrasion and impact.

Just like with boots and gloves now, there must be a label inside the gear that confirms that the gear meets the European standards and what level of protection is provided. Also information about maintenance, storage and use must be given to the buyer.

The exact standards and when all motorcycle gear in the shops must meet them are not known yet. It might even take some years. FEMA will inform the riders of all new developments.

This new regulation does not mean that riders are obliged to wear only approved clothing. This regulation is about selling approved protective clothing and not about wearing it. As far as we know the European Commission has no plans to make the wear of approved motorcycle gear mandatory.

FEMA's General Secretary Dolf Willigers commented: *“When all motorcycle gear meets the standard you know what amount of protection you can expect. This is consumer protection we don't have now. Of course the new standards will have to meet the needs of the riders, but with the information we have now I have all confidence that this will be the case. As long as the European authorities will not use these standards to force riders to wear only approved motorcycle gear, and we will see to it that this will not happen, standardization of motorcycle gear is a good thing for riders.”*

Helmets and visors are outside the scope of this regulation: they are covered by [UN ECE Regulation no. 22](#).

Leon's Bits

Much of Leon's recent work has been behind closed doors and working on policy matters that must be kept confidential for now in order to maintain MAG's increasingly high level of influence and capacity to advise fellow opponents of new threats to riders' rights, interests and safety who have much more financial and political power than us.

Leon has been directly involved with helping to deliver some big steps forwards in places such as the West Midlands and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority region – which members can read about in detail in the forthcoming issue of *The ROAD*.

News from London is mixed. Leon accompanied Selina in a meeting with TfL's top brass in which they confirmed that the long-awaited Handbook to help safety scheme designers consider motorcyclist much better will be published in February.

The other outcome from the meeting was to get confirmation of TfL's position regarding our concerns about adverse impacts of the massive relocation of road space for exclusive use by cyclists. In essence they intend to continue to ignore or dismiss our concerns.

Better news emerged from a meeting with the chair of the GLA's Transport Committee as a follow-up to Leon's input to their review of TfL's policy responses to motorcycling in the Capital. Leon was accompanied by Lembit and the GLA Transport Chair and the officer who will be drafting the GLA's report are now better aware of some key failings by TfL's and fundamental flaws their attitudes to motorcyclists and motorcycling.

Lembit's Bits

1 We've made a lot of progress with contact in the Greater London Authority. Lembit was able to set up a meeting with the Chair of the main Transport Committee in the Authority, Valerie Shawcross, to discuss a range of issues relating to motorcycling in London. Lembit says, 'I'm pleased I was able to set up the meeting, but the star of the show was Leon. Ms Shawcross was persuaded to make specific changes to a forthcoming report into London transport police. It was an absolutely excellent meeting, and there's some follow up to do, now.' This matters because what occurs in London can often send precedents for the rest of the country. We'll share our submission once it's complete, and once again gold star to Doc Mannings.

2 Lembit is encouraging the ongoing recruitment of MPs around the country. 'This is going to be my monthly mantra. I hope that we'll be able to engage with MPs in all the regions - and if you'd like to discuss the process of recruiting politicians, please feel free to get in touch. A big well done to those who have already made contact - and in one case even take their local MP for a spin on two wheels.'

3 The Scottish, Welsh, Northern Ireland and London elections are in May. We're seeking locations for debates in each of the nations and in London. The work we've already done with the GLA representative is a help with this. Our goal is to ensure that we quiz all the main parties before the elections. This worked very well last year in the General Election. Lembit is suggesting that these take place in February and March. 'I'll contact our reps in turn.' Steve Wykes in Scotland has suggested the Bike Show in Edinburgh on 12th March, and that makes a lot of sense to me as well. All dates will be confirmed once approved by Head Office.

4 Lembit and Leon supported an important piece of work as the MAG response to a traffic consultation by the Department for Transport. These are submitted in MAG's name to ensure that the biker's position is taken into account. From now on, we'll be keeping tabs on what is going in consultation terms - and that will increase our credibility and profile in the Department.

5 Lembit is having major surgery on 26th January 'to fix my wonky face.' In fact, it's a medical procedure to resolve a rather challenging matter he's been dealing since he had a serious paragliding accident in 1998. We'll keep you posted on progress.

This lovely little letter was received by the BMF who asked us to pass it onto our members. Good stuff:

I am not sure if this is the right way to do this, but maybe you will know the best way to do it?

I am not a biker...only been on the back of one once as a teenager...but as average Joe public, I think most people do not have any concept of what bloody lovely people bikers are in general!

I am a Nurse, working mostly with children now, and I have been really impressed for the last 20 years at all the fund raising for kids' charities, in particular, Birmingham Children's Hospital and Acorns Children's Hospices, the egg runs and Santa runs etc.

Now I read about the bikers of Yorkshire's MCCs, working to deter looters in flood areas (Pirates and, I suspect, loads more...) and generally being wonderful people.

So, on behalf of the average British public, thank you so much for all you do. We might not get chance to get the feedback back to you...but it is noticed. And, really appreciated. You bunch of sweeties! You can keep an eye on my house any time!

Please pass on the thanks if you can. Well done!

Alison Reeves-Guy. Walsall.



MAG MEDIA

Wants
YOU!

MAG Media Limited is looking for new volunteer Directors. If you have a few hours a month, have knowledge of publishing, marketing, design and print or similar and have an interest in our bi-monthly magazine we need your help. These are non-elected posts. Please email exec@mag-uk.org or write to Julie Sperling, MAG, Unit C13 Holly Farm Business Park, Honiley CV8 1NP explaining your interest and what experience you have.

***** NB: These are VOLUNTEER roles *****

MAG welcomes the good news that sales of commuter bikes and ptws in general are on the rise. MAG Chair, Selina Lavender, welcomed the news adding: "It's great to see this increase in sales in 2015 which will result in more mopeds, motorcycles and scooters on our roads. We know this in turn sees other road users being more aware of us. We will continue to work hard to get local and national Government to see the benefits of two wheeled

motorised transport which already has the recognition of many who are choosing to shift from log jamming four wheels. Riding is part of a flexible approach to transport policy and carries many benefits for all. MAG's long-standing campaign to open bus lanes to motorcycles is a major plank of our efforts on this front and we hope that many of the commuting riders recognise the value of our efforts and decide to support MAG by way of an individual membership."

MCIA story More 'commuter' motorcycles sold during 2015 than for the past 30 years (8th January 2016)

link: <http://www.mcia.co.uk/About/News/Article/More-commuter-motorcycles-sold-during-2015-than-for-the-past-30-years.aspx>

Money for nothing

With declining income from some of big events we all have to be more imaginative about fund raising. There is one very simple way to do this and that is to persuade our members to take out an MBNA credit card. You don't have to get into thousands of pounds of debt in order to help MAG balance the books. All you have to do is activate the card by using it and MAG gets about £30 from MBNA. It's a one off in each case but if we can get say 100 people a month taking out an MBNA card and say filling their tank once using it then MAG will be a lot better off.

Do the maths. Check out the ad in The ROAD. President Mutch.

One of the primary functions of NETWORK is 'networking' and the sharing of how we liaise with the authorities, councils, etc.

From Wales you can use the following examples of collaborative working.

1. The Motorcycle Safety Working Group sponsored by the Welsh Government and attended by interested parties, i.e. Police, Fire etc. has three MAG representatives. The Group has agreed policies such as the national policy proposal for bikes in all bus lanes across Wales. Policy proposed to prevent "Armadillos" being installed. A Standardised training programme for enhanced rider training being formulated by MAG and Bikesafe to roll out across Wales. The Welsh Governments Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) panel is being Chaired by MAG and provides £300,000 funding to companies that are developing products to aid motorcycle safety and collision prevention.
2. MAG also sits on seven of the South Wales local authorities Road Safety Committees.
3. MAG has also instituted the location marker scheme which is being rolled out across South Wales.

F E M A

Following Maria's example at SMC, I have made a page on the FEMA website listing all recalls of motorcycles and motorcycle products that have something wrong with them (there are some really scary malfunctions!). We will keep this page up to date.

You will find all the recent recalls at
www.fema-online.eu/website/index.php/consumer-information/rapid-alert-system-recalls
<<http://www.fema-online.eu/website/index.php/consumer-information/rapid-alert-system-recalls>>

Of course we have also published this news on our social media, so please share this with your riders/members!

Facebook:

<http://facebook.com/Federation-of-European-Motorcyclists-Associations-193674387342050>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/femaonline>

Google+: <https://plus.google.com/106243774695464060841>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/fema-europe>

Greetings, Wim.

GEM calls for compulsory eyesight testing for all drivers – [part]

GEM Motoring Assist is the latest road safety organisation to call on the Government to introduce compulsory eyesight testing for all drivers at regular intervals.

Last month (Dec 2015), Road Safety GB supported a call from a leading ophthalmologist urging drivers to undergo regular eye tests to ensure they have a clear view of the road, especially in the winter months.

David Teenan, UK medical director at Optical Express, stated that longer nights, low sun and treacherous weather can significantly impede the sight of drivers – causing temporary blindness in some cases.

GEM believes that a detailed test of a driver's visual acuity and field of view should be required every 10 years and says that better regulation of eyesight tests for drivers would cut collisions and make Britain's roads safer.

David Williams MBE, GEM chief executive, said: "We are worried that a large number of drivers have not had their eyes tested for many years – and some have never had a test.

"Many of us assume our vision is fine and does not require a check-up; however we have no way of knowing this for sure. That's why it's so important for road safety that the Government take steps to ensure regular, compulsory testing for all drivers.

"We believe it is unacceptable to operate a system where a driver can read a number plate aged 17 and carry on driving for 50 years or more without any eyesight check whatsoever.

"Along with many road safety organisations, we believe everyone should undergo a compulsory, professional eyesight test when applying for a provisional licence, with a further test every 10 years after that."

GEM also says that the current 'number plate' eyesight test, introduced to the driving test in 1937, is 'crude and outdated', as it only measures visual acuity (sharpness).

David Williams MBE added: “The time has come to accept that the current driver eyesight test simply isn’t fit for purpose. What’s more, it is certainly no longer acceptable for drivers to self-certify.

“As more and more people are staying behind the wheel into their eighties and beyond, the need for mandatory eyesight testing has never been more pressing.”

- See more at: <http://www.motoringassist.com/motoring-advice/news/gem-calls-for-overhaul-of-driver-eyesight-test/>

IAM calls for crackdown on persistent offenders

The Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) has called for tougher penalties on persistent offenders after revealing that three drivers with more than 40 points on their driving licences are still on the road.

The IAM’s Freedom of Information (FOI) request also found 13 people who currently have 28 or more points on their driving licence, the worst of those amassing 51 points.

In addition, the number of drivers with 12 or more points has increased by 9% in just seven months between March and October 2015 - from 6,884 to 7,517.

Sarah Sillars, IAM chief executive officer, said: “If the public sees that persistent offenders are getting away with it, they may believe that road traffic rules - which let not us not forget, are designed for their safety - are ineffective or unimportant.”

In October, GEM issued a call for a renewed focus to rid the UK’s roads of the most dangerous and persistent offenders, echoing a plea from the European Traffic Police Network, TISPOL.

In its reply to the IAM’s FOI request, the DVLA said: “In a small percentage of cases where the driver has accumulated 12 or more penalty points, the agency understands that a court can exercise its discretion and not disqualify the driver.

“In the majority of these cases, magistrates may have decided to allow drivers to retain their entitlement to drive where it is considered that disqualification would cause exceptional hardship.”

DVLA data shows that of the 45m driving licence holders in Britain, three million have points on their licence while some 100,000 have been disqualified over the past four years for accumulating 12 points.

The DVLA also says its evidence suggests that in 90% of cases where a driver reaches 12 points but is not disqualified, this is due to ‘judicial discretion’.

Sarah Sillars added: “The IAM has been highlighting this issue for several years now and we appreciate that the flow of information between the DVLA and the courts is slowly improving, which will allow the courts to make better decisions while armed with the full facts.

“However these improvements cannot come quickly enough to deliver a truly joined-up approach to the judicial process. Individual courts making decisions on prosecutions can

lead to inconsistency in how the law is applied which risks devaluing the simple '12 points and you're out' message.

- See more at: <http://www.iam.org.uk/media-and-research/media-centre/news-archive/20738-four-of-the-five-worst-driving-licence-penalty-point-holders-not-banned-iam-discovers>

:- <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/driving-licence-data>

AROUND GB

20mph plans move forward in Chester and Edinburgh

Chester and Cheshire West Council has approved plans to roll out mandatory 20mph limits for most residential roads throughout the borough.

Discussed at a cabinet meeting on 6 January, the approval means that the council can implement 20mph limits on residential roads where mean speeds are currently less than 24mph and around schools where the mean speed is currently less than 30mph.

Last September, road safety charity Brake issued a call for the removal of “unnecessary barriers” faced by local councils in implementing 20mph speed limits.

The Chester and Cheshire West Council meeting also commissioned a report detailing which areas would benefit the most from the revised speed limit while also approving a change to consultation requirements in a bid to streamline the process for introduction of 20mph limits.

Rod King MBE, founder of 20's plenty, who attended the meeting, said: “The decision waived the previous red tape and administrative overhead which had historically been imposed on communities and now the council is taking direct responsibility for the setting of 20mph limits.

“This decision adds Chester and Cheshire West to the growing number of traffic authorities with distributed communities that are seeing wide-area 20mph limits as a cost-effective and important measure to increase liveability, access, active travel and air quality in communities.”

On 7 January it was also announced that the first stage of a plan to introduce 20mph speed limits across roads in Edinburgh will begin in July.

The £2.2m project covers much of the city centre, from Queen Street to the Meadows and when completed, will eventually cover 80% of the Scottish capital's roads.

In-depth: Northern Ireland's new Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill

Tougher drink driving laws and a focus on newly qualified young drivers are the main features of a new Bill designed to improve road safety in Northern Ireland.

Last week (14 Jan), Road Safety News reported the passing of the new Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill in the Northern Ireland Assembly, outlining in brief the measures included in the legislation.

The Bill, described as a “comprehensive package”, will see the introduction of lower drink drive limits and greater police powers for breath tests; and added restrictions on younger drivers, including night driving, longer learning periods and a new Graduated Driver Licensing scheme (GDL).

The implementation of the new arrangements will require further public consultation and an extensive programme of subordinate legislation.

Drink-driving

Commenting on drink-driving, Mark Durkan, Northern Ireland’s environment minister, said: “What I have done in this Bill is to get to the root causes of the problem. That means tougher drink drive laws. It remains an unfortunate fact that some people think that they can continue to drink and drive.”

In relation to drink driving, the Bill provides for:

- Two new Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) limits: 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood (i.e. 50mg/100ml) for most drivers and 20mg/100ml for learner and novice drivers and professional drivers.
- The current drink drive limit in Northern Ireland is 80mg/100mls. This is a common limit applicable to all drivers, regardless of their licence status.
- A new graduated penalty regime that will provide for fixed penalties for first offences at lower limits and continued court prosecution for high level first offences, or any second or subsequent offences.
- Removal of the right for a driver to opt for a blood or urine sample to replace a breath sample in cases where the breath sample is marginally above the prescribed limit (commonly referred to as ‘the statutory option’).
- Powers to enable police to establish, under “controlled circumstances”, roadside check-points where an officer can require a driver to take a breath test.
- Automatic referral of offenders to a course for drink drive offenders unless a District Judge decides that attendance would be inappropriate. While an offender may be referred automatically, attendance will remain voluntary.

Young drivers

Young drivers have long been flagged up as a cause for concern as they are over represented in casualty statistics. Mr Durkan said: “The objective is to prepare new drivers to become a safe driver for life – rather than simply pass their test.”

The Bill provides for:

- A six-month mandatory minimum learning period; the provisional licensing age will remain at 17yrs but combined with the six-month minimum period, the full licensing age will effectively rise to 17½yrs.
- The completion of a programme of training, to be evidenced by an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI)/ supervising driver via a compulsory student logbook.
- Removal of the 45mph restriction on learner and restricted drivers - which will enable learner drivers to take lessons on motorways when accompanied by an ADI in a dual-controlled car.
- The introduction of time-bound restrictions (between the hours of 11pm and 6am) on carrying more than one young passenger (aged 14 to 20yrs) for drivers under the age of 24yrs during the first six-months post-test.

- The passenger restriction does not apply to immediate family members (of any age) or to passengers for whom the driver is entitled to receive carer's allowance.
- The passenger restriction will also not apply if an accompanying person is present in the front passenger seat aged 21yrs or older, who has held a full licence for three years or more; or if the vehicle is being "used for emergency purposes" such as fire and rescue, ambulance and police.

- See more at: <https://www.doeni.gov.uk/news/new-road-safety-measures-passed-by-assembly>

Cambridge

If you ride in or around Cambridge please use this link to comment on proposed transport plans for the city to highlight motorcycle use to aid congestion problems, how making vehicle lanes narrower will effect you and promote the idea of sharing bus lanes to aid traffic movement/safety for bikers.

<http://www.gccitydeal.co.uk/citydeal/info/2/transport/1/transport/9>

Report highlights concerns over distracting technology

A report into in-car technology highlights growing concerns about the dangers of driver distraction, but also reveals a responsible attitude from a majority of drivers towards using new technology in a safe manner.

The RAC Foundation report, based on a public attitude survey by Ipsos MORI, reveals that 69% of more than 2,000 respondents agreed that technologies which connect the driver to the outside world could distract them from driving safely.

The report examines how drivers are increasingly connected, both through in-built vehicle technology and portable devices they bring into the vehicle, which increases the risk of driver distraction.

Despite these concerns, respondents are keen to adapt to the technology in order to stay safe behind the wheel.

Three-fifths (60%) of drivers polled said they would be happy to use a safe mode when driving to prevent or reduce distraction by mobile phones and other devices. A number of apps, including 'Drive safely keep focused' and 'ICED by Speed', have been developed for this purpose.

The survey also highlights an appetite for driver and vehicle connectivity as prospective buyers look for these new technologies when purchasing a new car.

85% said that live information about the condition of the car was an important factor. 81% looked for live traffic/congestion alerts, 79% wanted their new car to be fitted with a sat nav, and 71% wanted speed camera warnings.

Steve Gooding, director of the RAC Foundation, said: "This survey tells us the majority of motorists would back a 'car safe' mode to prevent mobiles interfering with a driver's concentration.

"Reassuringly, the vast majority of people said they wanted to use technology to check the state of their vehicle and make their journeys easier, not to read Facebook messages, send texts or email the boss.

"There was a time when transport connectivity referred solely to how easy it was to get from A to B: how well are places 'connected'? But with the telecoms revolution there is increasing debate around connected cars and drivers. Technology brings us huge benefits. We just need to make sure it does so safely."

- See more at: <http://www.racfoundation.org/media-centre/most-driver-back-car-safe-mode-for-mobile-phones-ipsos-mori-survey-shows-press-release>

-:

http://www.racfoundation.org/assets/rac_foundation/content/downloadables/Ipsos_MORI_Connected_Drivers_attitude_survey_final.pdf

Bill calls for tougher penalties for criminal driving offences and better treatment for victims

A Bill which seeks to strengthen penalties for criminal driving offences that lead to serious injury or death was presented to parliament yesterday (12 January).

The Criminal Driving (Justice for Victims) Bill was introduced to the House of Commons by Lib Dem MP Greg Mulholland and has received backing from MPs across the House. The Bill also looks to redefine criminal driving offences and amend bail conditions for those charged, and enhance standards of investigation by the police and in the Courts.

It also demands improved standards of treatment for victims of criminal driving offences and their families within the justice system.

The Leeds North West MP has been a long time campaigner for better justice for victims of road crime.

Commenting on his own website, Mr Mulholland said: "I have seen the devastation these serious crimes cause and witnessed just a little of the grief of the families of Jamie Still from Otley and David and Dorothy Metcalf from Cookridge, who were killed by criminally reckless driving.

"There are families up and down the country who have been through the same life shattering experience of losing loved ones. Yet as if the devastation and loss were not enough, too many of these families have been failed by the justice system, too many victims have been denied justice.

"We will all be holding government to account in the months ahead, especially with a consultation document on potential changes now expected later this year. I am writing to justice ministers to ask them to look at what the Criminal Driving Bill calls for and how soon we can bring forward these changes."

The Bill was co-sponsored by 30 MPs from across the House.

-: <http://gregmulholland.org/en/article/2016/1139044/greg-mulholland-presents-bill-demanding-tougher-criminal-driving-laws>

Report reveals Google's self-driving crash data

Drivers of Google's self-driving car had to intervene 13 times between September 2014 and November 2015 in order to stop the vehicle from crashing.

The figures are revealed in Google Self-Driving Car Testing Report which was requested by California's Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

The report also shows that during the same time period, Google's autonomous car recorded 272 disengagements (where the driver was forced to take over following a detection of a failure of the autonomous technology) over a distance of 424,331 miles, an average of once every 1,560 miles.

In December 2015, a freedom of information request revealed that the Internet giant has held five meetings in the last two years with the Department for Transport (DfT) to discuss introducing driverless cars to the UK.

This followed the publication of draft proposals by the DMV intended to pave the way for the public to use self-driving cars on roads in California.

The 32-page Google report highlights an improvement in reliability, showing that the number of autonomous miles driven per disengagement is increasing.

The report reads: "Our test drivers play a critical role in refining our technology and ensuring the safe operation of the vehicles while we are in this development phase.

"They are directed to take control of the vehicle as often as they feel is necessary and for a variety of reasons relating to the comfort of the ride, the safety of the vehicle, or the erratic or unpredictable behaviour of other road users.

"Each time a test driver takes manual control of the vehicle, our system automatically records the circumstances leading up to the disengagement from autonomous mode and flags them for review by the software team.

"This information, along with feedback given by the test driver, is used to evaluate the software for any potential."

The California DMV also requested information from other autonomous driving manufacturers, including Tesla and Nissan.

- See more at: <https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/wcm/connect/dff67186-70dd-4042-bc8c-d7b2a9904665/GoogleDisengagementReport2014-15.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>

-: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/google/12046720/Googles-meetings-with-UK-Government-over-driverless-cars-revealed.html>

-: https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv/detail/vr/autonomous/disengagement_report

Removing traffic lights would 'boost economy and road safety'

Eight in 10 traffic lights 'should be ripped out' over concerns they are detrimental to road safety, the economy and the environment.

That is the conclusion of a report from the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), which says that an 'alternative approach' - shared space - can improve road safety without the 'colossal costs' associated with traffic lights.

'Seeing Red: Traffic Controls and the Economy' concludes that a two-minute delay to every car journey equates to a loss of approximately £16bn every year.

The report advocates the use of shared space schemes which involve the removal of conventional traffic infrastructure such as traffic lights, road markings and bollards.

The authors argue that evidence demonstrates that when regulations are removed, including the 'unfair rules' that give some vehicles priority over others, drivers behave with more consideration to other road users, improving safety and allowing traffic to flow more smoothly.

There are plans to introduce shared spaces in some UK towns, including Bodmin where almost two thirds of people who attended an exhibition on the scheme supported the proposed plans.

The authors point to a number of case studies, including Ashford, where they claim there was a 41% fall in injury accidents in the first three years after a shared space scheme was introduced.

However, there is strong opposition to the shared space concept. A report prepared by Lord Holmes of Richmond MBE claimed they cause 'confusion, chaos and catastrophe'.

The IEA report, published on 25 January, reveals that the number of traffic lights in England has increased by 25% since 2000. By comparison, vehicle traffic rose by 5%, and the length of the road network by just 1.3% in the same period.

Dr Richard Wellings, head of transport at the IEA, said: "For too long policymakers have failed to make a cost-benefit analysis of a range of regulations – including traffic lights, speed cameras and bus lanes – making life a misery for drivers nationwide.

"It's quite clear that traffic management has spread far beyond the locations where it might be justified, to the detriment of the economy, environment and road safety.

"The evidence of shared space schemes shows the transformational benefits of less regulated approach, whilst the removal of a high proportion of traffic lights would deliver substantial economic and social benefits."

- See more at: <http://www.iea.org.uk/in-the-media/press-release/rip-out-80-of-traffic-lights-to-boost-economy-road-safety>

-: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/4512.html>

-: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/4454.html>

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IAM's calls for increased investment in roads finally answered, as councils spend more on road projects

Many county councils across England appear to have responded to criticisms about failing to make pothole repair and road maintenance a top priority, the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) has found, with increased spending across the country.

A Freedom of Information (FOI) request by the IAM has found councils are following government-stated best practice and increasingly investing more money into capital projects (i.e. road rebuilding) rather than spending funds on short-term temporary repairs.

In early 2015 the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA) confirmed a backlog of repairs topped £12 billion, while an IAM survey found that 64 per cent of participants cited general road maintenance as one of their biggest concerns (reference 1).

The FOI request asked county councils how much they spent on fixing road surface defects such as potholes and how much they spent on capital projects to resurface roads between 2013 and 2015.

While the IAM's findings reveal many councils are spending less on filling potholes, 17 out of 23 of them are in fact spending more overall on resurfacing worn-out roads.

The top five county councils to invest the most money into road repairs and resurfacing between 2014/15 include:

1. Surrey – £44 million
2. North Yorkshire – £43.9 million
3. Cumbria – £33.5 million
4. Devon – £32 million
5. Lincolnshire – £30.2 million

In percentage terms, the following councils have increased their capital spending on resurfacing roads the most:

1. Oxfordshire – 139 per cent (from £4.6 million to £11 million)
2. Cambridgeshire – 85 per cent (from £10.5 million to £19.4 million)
3. Norfolk – 45 per cent (from £19 million to £27.6 million)
4. Leicestershire – 43 per cent (from £7.5 million to £10.7 million)
5. West Sussex – 38 per cent (from £19.5 million to £27 million)

County councils that have invested the most money into temporary pothole repairs between 2014/15 include:

1. Kent - £7.7 million
2. Devon - £5.98 million
3. Gloucestershire - £5.93 million
4. Cumbria - £5.4 million
5. Surrey - £4.88 million

The top five councils increasing spending for temporary pothole repairs in percentage terms compared to the previous year are:

1. West Sussex – 57 per cent (from £1.4 million to £2.2 million)
2. Nottinghamshire - 28 per cent (from £1.5 million to £1.92 million)
3. Norfolk – 23 per cent (from £2.6 million to £3.2 million)
4. Devon – 21 per cent (from £4.9 million to £5.9 million)
5. Dorset – 15 per cent (from £2.6 million to £3.2 million)

In tandem with the increase in spending on resurfacing roads, the IAM has discovered eight out of 21 councils are spending less on filling potholes.

Sarah Sillars, IAM chief executive officer, said: “We are very pleased that our calls for greater investment in local roads appear to be having some effect.

“We hope this trend continues. With council tax increases this April, we very much hope councils will use some of the extra money in continued investment in their own vital local roads, the condition of which has a direct impact on road safety.

“The IAM welcomed the government’s pothole fund as a solution for short-term problems, but our figures show that the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme is really starting to deliver long-term benefits by encouraging a shift to capital spend and sharing of knowledge and resources.”

ENDS

1. Reference 1: <http://www.iam.org.uk/component/content/article?id=20629>
 2. To see how your county council has performed see the full table of findings: <http://bit.ly/1Si2yWS>
 3. The IAM is the UK’s largest independent road safety charity, dedicated to improving standards and safety in driving and motorcycling. The commercial division of the IAM operates through its occupational driver training company IAM Drive & Survive. The IAM has more than 200 local volunteer groups and over 90,000 members in the UK and Ireland. It is best known for the advanced driving test and the advanced riding test for motorcycling. Its policy and research division offers advice and expertise on road safety.
-

Motorcycling in France

New laws have come into force for motorcyclists and scooter riders regarding the requirement to carry a fluorescent hi viz vest or jacket while riding in France. (From January 2016)

The new €11 fine applies if you get spot checked by police and you don’t have one with you, though the fine is €135 if you are caught not wearing it at the roadside (or on the hard shoulder) in the event of an emergency due to an accident, flat tyre or breakdown. (pillion passengers need to have one as well)

The introduction of the fine has come into force following yet more poor figures on the number of road deaths in France.

Finally a Decision

It seems to have taken an age to finally implement this law as it was originally talked about seven or eight years ago. It was up until recently a classic case of “we used to be indecisive but now we’re not so sure” from the French government.

Originally the (former) French Interior Minister, Claude Guéant, wanted to bring this in however under pressure from the French motorcyclist’s pressure group (FFMC – French Federation of Angry Bikers), he backed down.

Motorcycling in France Requirements

Spare bulbs, along with the Hi Viz and Breathalysers but I personally don’t take breathalysers any-more because there is no longer fine for not carrying them. Though they are still listed as a legal requirement by the French authorities.

Read all about the back story to the breathalyser rules and my opinion on it here. [Breathalysers do you need them?](#)

You also should have reflective stickers for your helmet in four places - one on the front, one at the back and one on each side. They must be fitted in a way that it does not hinder the opening/closing visor of your helmet. (Some helmets have them fitted as standard)

Stickers must have a minimum surface area of 18cm². You can buy top quality stickers from us here. [Motorcycle Helmet Stickers for France.](#)

Also the new rules state that wearing gloves for motorcyclists will be a mandatory requirement, though I would guess that most serious riders would be wearing gloves these days without it being compulsory.

If you want to purchase any/all the items you need see the [requirements page here](#).

See also this new [Motorcycling legislation](#) about riding in-between lanes of stationary traffic in France. People have always done it but it looks like they might finally make it legal.

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Headlights

It is compulsory for dipped headlamps to be used day and night and although they are for cars if you get a set of headlamp converters they will do the job of preventing you from dazzling oncoming drivers. [Headlamp Converters for France](#). They only come with fitting instructions for cars but you should be able to work it out, and you'll get 2 in the pack so if you mess up the first attempt you'll at least have a spare.

Tips for Motorcycle Holidays

Motorcycle holidays through France can be terrific and many people enjoy the thrill of biking through some of the great French countryside which has fantastic scenery, quiet roads and friendly locals who generally like bikes and bikers more than the UK do.

Priority

As a motorcycle rider you will be used to people pulling out without seeing you but in France they may have seen you but be driving under a very old system known as 'Priorité à droite'. So read about it here <http://www.drive-france.com/faqs/get-your-priorities-right/> and make a note of the signs because people will pull out from side roads onto the main carriageway without warning.

Details of other important here: <http://www.drive-france.com/faqs/french-road-signs/>

Rules for Riding in France

Ride on the right! Sounds daft but you'd be amazed how many forget that small fact. It's not usually when you first get there as you are always concentrating then, it's when you have been there 3 or 4 days and slip into autopilot mode.

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