



NETWORK

JANUARY 2015

A networking tool for Activists and other interested parties

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Editorial

ELECTION YEAR

"Make the debate happen

General Election 2015: guide to get candidates to back riders' rights" – probably the most important document you'll read this year is an addendum to this month's NETWORK.

As you can see from the above paragraph the 13 page Addendum is designed to give you all the information you need on the lead up to the Election.

An important year and an ideal opportunity for all of us to reaffirm Bikers are, most definitely, Voters.

I'll keep this Editorial short as there's a lot of information in this edition which, together with the Election Document, is far more important than me dribbling on!

All I'm going to do is wish you all a very healthy and happy 2015 with safe and enjoyable riding throughout.

Ride free, AG.

Acknowledgments: George Legg. Trevor Baird. Ian Mutch. Steve O'Kane. Andy Carrott. Selina Lavendar. John Mitchell. Lembit & Leon (or, team Double L, as I affectionately call them) and anyone else I've forgotten.

Any copy for Network please email me: aine@mag-uk.org subject heading Network.

Annual Group Conference Awards

Every year at AGC awards are given in recognition of the dedication of the many people that support MAG throughout the year. If you would like to nominate a potential recipient then please do so through your Regional Rep or the Chairman (chair@mag-uk.org) with a written statement in support of your nomination including your name and membership number. The National Committee will discuss all nominees at the February (14th) NC meeting and make the final decision which will be revealed at AGC (April 11th in Bridgewater).

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

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

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

Honorary Life Membership Awarded in respect for significant work over a sustained period on behalf of the group. Except in exceptional circumstances nominees for Honorary Life membership should have been fully paid up ordinary members of MAG for an unbroken period of at least ten years prior to nomination for this award. No more than three Honorary Life Memberships may be awarded annually.

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

The Chairman's Award Awarded by the National Chairman to a group or individual that has made a significant and otherwise unrecognised contribution to the work of the Group.

Certificates of Merit Awarded to an individual/group in recognition of outstanding achievement/dedication over a period of time.

Fundraising

It's no secret that MAG has funding issues. Like most other Riders' Rights organisations in Europe our membership has gradually declined over the years, as has the motorcycling population in general. That's down to a number of factors, not least the ridiculously expensive licensing regime, insurance costs and the general economic malaise since the financial crisis. On top of all this attendance has fallen at some of our biggest rallies; partly due to the general decline in motorcycling, the aging population of motorcyclists and a few years of horrendous weather. We had a good summer in 2014 but attendance at the Farmyard Party was still down by thousands on our best years, likewise that at Stormin' The Castle. It seems bikers have long memories where the weather is concerned, despite us 'weather-proofing' the Farmyard and Stormin to a large extent.

The irony is that while we have less resources – in real terms than at any time in the last 25 years, MAG is a more effective force than it has even been, where it counts – lobbying for YOUR rights. The political team of Lembit Öpik and Leon Mannings are spearheading our efforts in the UK, now backed up by some of the best volunteer lobbyists we have ever had.

At an International level we, with our FEMA partners, have worked to improve our effectiveness in Europe. All round we've made and are continuing to make economies.

All we're short of is members, cash and sunshine. There's not a lot we can do about the weather but the other two can be fixed if we all work hard enough.

We currently have 81 MAG groups throughout the country. If each could raise £100 every month as a donation to our national finances, our basic operating costs would be covered. Having the income at regular monthly intervals would also be a big help. In the past it's been 'lumpy' for want of a better word, which has made planning difficult. (Not so difficult when big lumps of cash come in but very difficult when they don't.)

On a personal level I am experimenting with an 'Eat for MAG' initiative which is outlined on page 63 of the current issue of *The ROAD*. You could all give this a go but a simpler idea is to raffle a bottle of something or a donated item at the beginning of every local meeting. If you keep the ticket price modest at say £1 then most people will probably buy a ticket and you have both a mildly novel element to each meeting and a steady source of income. Never think that the smallest of efforts are not of value. It's easy to think that against MAG's costs, ten or twenty quid is negligible but oceans are created by countless drips and dribbles all heading in the same direction. If anyone wants to raffle any of my books then you are welcome to use them as prizes.

The other big income stream possibility is the deal we've struck with Preformed Markings (see page 14 of the latest *ROAD*). If we can get councils and utility companies to treat their manhole covers with their non-slip coating – that costs about £40 per cover – MAG gets 10%. With 50 million covers in the UK it doesn't take long to work out that this could be a fantastic money-spinner for MAG that could blow our financial worries into history.

Network is in large part a vehicle for reps and activists to share best practice, so if you pursue any of these ideas then let us know what success or what problems you encounter and everyone can profit from your experience.

Ian Mutch, MAG President

Lembit & Leon – update on Campaigns.

- 1) In December, MAG was, for the first time in history, officially represented at the 'BEN Ball' in London, which is the charitable event to raise money for those in need and related to the automotive and motorcycle industries. There is great potential for work between BEN and the National Association of Bikers with Disabilities, which shares common goals. This is work for the new year, but MAG's presence at the BEN Ball is a further indication of the organisation's growing status.
- 2) Dr Leon Mannings is now fully involved in the policy making activities of PACTs – the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety. 'Policy forums aren't everyone's cup of tea,' explains Leon, 'but we've simply got to be at the table. These groups help to form the future direction of Government transport laws. If we watch from a distance, bikers won't be represented. My attendance is far more than just being at a meeting - it's marking the territory for riders' rights. There are lots of detailed things going on there, and I'll report on

them in The road. What matters now is we're putting ourselves in a good place in the run up for the General Election and beyond.'

- 3) Lembit has been in further talks with Preformed Markings Limited – which makes a surface coating for manhole covers that stops them from being lethal to riders. 'It's not the only solution,' says Lembit, 'but it's the cheapest one we've found. They've proved it works on the North West 200 road racing circuit, and everywhere they've used it, there's been a huge improvement in road grip. We're working to get local authorities to take the problem seriously, and to consider this as a quick and easy solution which won't break the bank.' In January, Lembit expects that conversations will begin with a number of Councils, to reduce the risks which slippery slabs of metal on the road present to riders
- 4) With the General Election only months away, Lembit and Leon have increased their contact with all the political parties. Discussions are actively occurring with representatives from a cross section of political groups and the aim is to get them to buy into the MAG election manifesto. This work is likely to form the majority of the work for Lembit in particular. It's the very best way to make sure riders are accepted as a part of the UK's transport solution.
- 5) Lembit has invited all local activists to engage with their potential future MPs by organising local debates to discuss the issues facing riders in what's called an 'election hustings.' There's info on this in most recent edition of The Road, and a campaign pack is also available from Central Office. The idea is to get the candidates to commit to supporting riders' issues before they get elected. Then we can go back and hold them to account afterwards. Please contact HQ anytime to get help or advice about the best way to go about making these events happen. Lembit adds 'they're really important, and our experience is that it's relatively easy to get candidates to agree to our needs, as they often aren't even aware of the issues which affect bikers and scooter users, let alone the benefits to everyone of fewer cars and more bikes. We're on a roll with the parties, and the more you can do to help with this locally, the more our voice will be heard by the next government.'
- 6) Leon has been in talks with the BMF over recent weeks, to see if we can improve our relationship with that grouping, following tensions over some policy matters earlier in 2014. The good news is that these discussions have led to a significant warming of relations, on the simple basis that we've both got the same general interests at heart. MAGA and the BMF have distinctly different character as organisations, but the less we fight each other, the more we can fight for riders' rights. This is likely to be helpful as we approach the election and after that too.
- 7) The Motor Cycle Industry Association has shown more interest in working with MAG, following a series of contacts over November and December. Lembit says 'they make them and we use them, so there's an obvious logic for us to work together in areas of common interest. There will also be areas of disagreement, but that's normal. If we can drive forward in those areas where we agree, then there's every reason to believe this multiplies our effectiveness. We're still testing the waters with all this, and there's no need for haste. But taking it step by step, perhaps there's a lot more that we can do than people imagined. Locally, colleagues may wish to approach their local dealerships and offer them the chance to become corporate members – it's a money spinner for MAG and a great way to get closer links with kindred spirits.'
- 8) January is Election Planning Month. It's when we've got to get everything sorted out until May, because it takes time to organise things, and Lembit needs to know where and when he needs to be out with you, subject, of course, to the OK from HQ. Get your requests in as soon as you can, and Central will work out the most logical way to do everything.

- 9) In January, Lembit is helping out at the Manchester Custom Bike Show on 10th January. Tony Cox and Jimmy T. are, as always, doing a fantastic job of organising things with the local members. Judging by recent events, Manchester is set to become one of the shining beacons for MAG in 2015. 'I love going to Manchester,' says Lembit. 'MAG there has such a sense of drive and progress, and if we can find a way to convert that into new members, then that's the BINGO result.'
- 10) Three more MPs have asked to join MAG – Adrian Saunders, Nick Harvey and Stephen Gilbert, all from the South West. Ask your local MP if they'll join and point out that thousands of local electors are fully qualified riders and use their bikes every day. This is a big motivator. We're sure quite a few will join if they're asked.
- 11) Looking back at 2014, Leon observes, 'I can hardly believe how much we've got done in the last 12 months. It's remarkable how much we've built the reputation of MAG with the decision-makers. Our goal in 2015 is to turn that credibility into commitments of support. I hope we'll all be able to play our part, and to share in the success which surely comes from a team effort. Lembit and I are here for you, and for riders' rights across the UK. It's our mission, our passion and, honestly, our honour to be part of a quiet riding revolution. As a rider, so are you. Here's to a lively and productive 2015.'

And, as we look to the following year:

As the New Year begins, all action is focussed on the General Election. Over the last 15 months, MAG has been tirelessly developing links with political parties across the board. The goal now is to turn this relationship building into solid, trustworthy commitments with the key people in the parties likely to be most significantly represented in the next Parliament. As such, organising local debates with candidates is absolutely essential for keeping the pressure on the various parties. Please have a look at the extensive materials designed to making these debates happen easy. Call us at HQ if you have ANY problems. Lembit adds: 'if I could run them all myself I'd happily do so, but in fact we can all play our part in making the politicians commit NOW to what we need them to do LATER. Have a look at the pack, and give it a go.'

As has been previously reported, Lembit is going to the Manchester Custom Bike Show, on the 10th January. 'I do find any excuse to go North,' confesses Lembit, 'but then again, fortune favours the brave – and they're incredibly active in the North West. I'm hoping to get one of our excellent Parliamentary supporters, John Leech MP, to visit the stand, but it's dependent on his other commitments. The fact that's the ONLY condition shows how much more seriously we're being taken these days.'

Leon is gearing up to do the heavy lifting on a number of policy forums in January and February. 'PACTS and TfL are a bunch of letter which mean a lot for riders across the UK. The more we get our ideas across in these groups, the more we make biking a serious contender for attention amongst the big players who DON'T change from election to election. I'll keep you posted on the interesting bits and do the rest myself.'

January also sees further discussion between MAG and the Motorcycle Industry Association, which represents the manufacturers of the bikes we ride. Relations have never really been bad between the two groups, but they seem to have hit a positive spot now, mainly because bikers and bike makers realise how much they have to gain from working together. It's still a negotiation, but probably there will be benefits to the both of us working together in the areas we agree with in the run up to May 7th – that all important General Election.

Lembit is also seeking to find a test case for manhole cover accidents, to use as a precedent regarding the need for local action by Councils. If you know of cases could you let him know please. We're keen to make sure that there is an absolutely solid body of evidence to show why the politicians need to take the manhole cover issue seriously.

Northern Ireland

MAG working with the right people is now a main focus and goal of all the volunteers here in Northern Ireland. We've sat on the Motorcycle Road Safety Forum for the past three years and now things are paying off, it is true the wheels turn slowly on the Hill as we call Stormont.

Usually they are fighting over who killed who 400 years ago but with increasing pressure to deliver on real issues that effect us here and now, they are wanting to hear from us and others like Trevor at Right to Ride.

Quick note to keep you up to date, just gave a 40 minute phone interview to a very nice lady who works on behalf of the powers that be here in N.I (Stormont)

We talked about the history of MAG i.e. old MAG and what we have achieved as a prominent voice in the motorcycle community. The projects we're working on now and where we see ourselves in the future i.e. the voice for all biking related ventures.

How we are trying to engage bikers from all walks of life to gain the tools to save themselves through Bike Safe and a new style Advanced Training which we ourselves are coming up with in a joint venture with the police riders and Woolsey Coulter (former GP rider and multiple British Champion).

So with race stars and instructors from the police and race scene to combat the increase in road deaths here through Bike Safe and the Woolsey Coulter ART Academy (Training NOT Testing). As the EU would have us believe that they have the answers to all our problems i.e. Testing, testing, testing which has be proven not the be the case here with more RTCs than ever since they stuck their unwelcome nose in.

Our idea for a National Bike Day here and across the UK to show the public we ain't the Sons of Anarchy, just normal run of the mill folk, from Doctors, the Bus drivers even the odd politician (i.e. our Lembit, Paisley Jnr., and our Steve Baker) with a passion for two and three wheels.

Her finding and research will go the Northern Ireland Executive and the DOE Road Safety Commission, so here is hoping they bring MAG along for the ride in a more official capacity as a main political voice in the near future.

Ride free brother & sisters, Steven O'Kane .. MAG norn Iron.

Off-Road Vehicles (Registration) Bill 2014-15

David Ward the MP for Bradford has presented a Private Members Bill in Parliament calling for off road vehicles to be registered after being sold in order to assist the Police with dealing with anti-social behaviour in Bradford.

The Off-Road Vehicles (Registration) Bill 2014-15 makes provision for the establishment of a compulsory registration scheme at the point of sale for all off-road motorcycles and quad bikes; and for connected purposes.

The exact wording of the Bill has not been published yet, the text is due to be published in January, but the aim of the Bill is set out as to, *“Enable Police to access records on a vehicles make and model which will better allow them to identify the perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and take enforcement action.”*

The MP has said that the government has been reticence in changing the current law, therefore, in support of this Bill he has tabled an Early Day Motion 620 in Parliament calling on the Government to introduce the registration of Off Road Vehicles as a tool to help combat anti-social behaviour.

Early Day Motion 620 - Registration Of Off-Road Vehicles

“That this House calls on the Government to introduce a compulsory register of off-road vehicles; notes that Bradford has a high incidence of anti-social behaviour related to the use of off-road vehicles; acknowledges that quad bikes and dirt bikes are used as weapons to perform acts of anti-social behaviour; appreciates that it is almost impossible for the police to safely tackle inappropriate use of off-road vehicles; also notes that the police are unable to investigate such crimes without suitable identification markers on off-road vehicles being registered; further notes that there is currently a voluntary scheme for off-road vehicle owners to register their vehicles in case they are stolen; welcomes the hard work and dedication of West Yorkshire Police's Quad Squad who do a good job at attempting to tackle anti-social behaviour; also welcomes the argument that compulsory registration would enable the police to access more information in order to identify suspect bikes and make it significantly easier for the police to bring to justice those who are illegally riding their vehicles on public roads; celebrates the fact that this measure would reduce crime and increase safety in neighbourhoods and would encourage off-road vehicle users to use their vehicles legally and responsibly; and calls once again on the Government to introduce compulsory registration of off-road vehicles.”

All commendable aims one would say!

However, the devil is in the detail and this is not the first time that a similar named bill has been introduced and one that MAG was against.

In 2007 Graham Stringer MP for Blackley Manchester, introduced his ‘off road vehicles, (registration) bill by way of a similar private members bill.

The bill was brought about to specifically deal with localised problems caused by the irresponsible, illegal and anti social use of mini motos, the intention of the Bill was to extend the current registration scheme which applied to road vehicles to include those vehicles used off road.

All sounds a bit familiar so far?

Posters in The Road

The current edition of The Road featured a centre pull out double sided poster. It can be removed without damaging your magazine. I've already seen it on display at a biker venue in Lincoln (the very accommodating Millers Arms on the High Street). Please feel free to take yours to any location where bikes meet and pin it on the notice board. There are perhaps the obvious pubs and cafes but do you work somewhere with a large work force where some travel by bike or scooter? Can you pin it on the canteen notice board? Posters can get a bit lost where there are lots of things all on the same lines but if it's somewhere unexpected it stands out. You could even try leaving your old copies of The Road in the doctor or dentists surgery next time you are there.

Anything to spread the message, especially to the un-converted. Andy Carrott.

Photo card Licence paper Counterpart

Sounds like the DoT have got themselves into order again on the removal of the counterpart to photo card licences - June 2015 is when they go for good.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/driving-licence-changes>

Parliament – Written Question - Motorcycles: Accidents

In November Steve Baker MP for Wycombe and Chairman of the All-Party Group for Motorcycling asked a question in Parliament to Robert Goodwill the Secretary of State for Transport.

“To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of injuries to motorcyclists caused by wire rope barriers in the last three years; and if he will make a statement.”

Robert Goodwill answered – *“The information requested is not available. Information on whether the motorcyclist impacted a wire rope barrier is not routinely collected by the police.”*

So really a non-report and the question raises more questions than it answered. Who would collect and keep information on motorcycle collisions against, not only, wire rope barriers?

We suspect that the info will be there if fatalities and serious injuries have been investigated, it will be in the police/coroners reports - it just will not be collected in "stats 19 - so it would take a bit of investigation - but who would do that?

MAG Northern Ireland, working with other rider representatives, have been involved in discussions with the Minister (responsible for roads) regarding the ongoing fitting of Wire Rope Barriers there!

“Written questions allow Members of Parliament to ask government ministers for information on the work, policy and activities of government departments.”

Parliament website - <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2014-11-06/213672/>

Federation of European Motorcyclists' Associations – FEMA - Speaks on European road safety

FEMA tells European Commission: 'There is no need for a three stage license system'. In Brussels FEMA brought forward the topic of training and licensing and offered help and expertise to the European Commission to formulate a suitable directive.

On 17th November 2014 Aline Delhaye and Dolf Willigers represented FEMA at the “workshop in preparation of the mid-term evaluation of Commission Road Safety Policy Orientations 2011-2020” in the Berlaymont building in Brussels.

Delegates from several governmental and nongovernmental organizations gave in an assessment of the period 2011-2014 their views on the success of the Road Safety Policy of the Commission. Most were quite satisfied, but also stated that the term was very short to take conclusions.

It seemed FEMA was the only organization that wasn't very pleased with the results, this mainly because of the effects of the third driving license directive. FEMA considers this directive as having reinforced barriers to entry to motorcycling and believes in giving riders high quality training, the efficacy of which is likewise confirmed by the outcome of the Riderscan survey. We do not see any evidence for the necessity of a three stage license system. Several speakers also put emphasis on training and awareness of road users, others focussed on ICT to achieve safer traffic. Most speakers asked more attention for vulnerable road users, including motorcyclists.

When looking at the future, several speakers asked for impact assessments. FEMA advocated the need of data and accident related research and mentioned the role of ITS. Several other speakers did the same, although the 'safety organizations' focussed more on intelligent speed assistant (ISA) systems and mandatory alcohol interlocks.

FEMA brought forward again the topic of training and licensing and offered help and expertise to the Commission to formulate a suitable directive. The representative of the Commission stated that when the time comes for legislation, the Commission will use the knowledge of the stakeholders. Of course we will do everything we can to get involved in a proper training and licensing system.

Article on the FEMA Website – <http://www.fema-online.eu/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=412&cntnt01returnid=15>

Swedish motorcycle vision 2.0

The Swedish Motorcyclists Association SMC has presented 'The motorcycle vision 2.0' in English.

The Motorcycle Vision 1.0 was presented at the Tylösand Road Safety Conference 2008 for the first time. The aim was to introduce the motorcyclists' views on the targets in Vision Zero

and how they should be achieved. Six years later SMC releases the Motorcycle Vision version 2.0, updated on the basis of statistics, research, new knowledge and experiences.

The Swedish Motorcyclists Association, SMC was formed in 1963. Early in our history the members started to realize the importance of working with road safety, the need to educate members, authorities and decision makers in order to influence decisions and gain focus on our needs.

SMC has for example requested a helmet law, compulsory dipped headlights and a separate motorcycle license. *(A couple of items there that may raise your eyebrows)* As early as 1973 SMC began offering voluntary advanced training for motorcyclists. Thus, SMC has for over 50 years pursued a Vision Zero - with our own goals, in our own way and with our own methods.

PDF document -

http://www.svmc.se/smc_filer/SMC%20central/Rapporter/2014/The%20Motorcycle%20Vision%202.0%20English%20print.pdf

Carrying Number Plates

The 2007 Bill also included off road motorcycles used legitimately by responsible owners in sporting events held off road. These included; Trials, Moto-cross, speedway, grass tracking, enduros, road racing on purpose built circuits and closed roads such as the Isle of Man TT races.

It would have also affect farmers, council and theme park workers who use quad bikes for essential work off road.

At that time in 2007 the government did not want this bill to be passed and a wide ranging group of organisations from all walks of life, which included the Motor Cycle Industry Association, the National Farmers Union, the Agricultural Engineers Association, the RAC Foundation, the Land Access and Recreational Association, the riders groups MAG and BMF and the Auto Cycle Union came together in a coalition to lobby against the Bill.

The bill sought to force all off road motorcycles and quadricycles to be registered and carry number plates, the roads minister of the day, Dr Steven Ladyman made it clear that the bill was unnecessary and unworkable. He outlined that there were already sufficient powers allowing the police, local authorities and other agencies to deal with this problem.

The 2007 Bill was eventually withdrawn.

So it will be interesting to see the actual wording of the Bill to see if it follows the same route as the previous Bill or offers anything different.

You can follow the progress of the Bill on the Parliament website -

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2014-15/offroadvehiclesregistration.html>

Government Threat to Scooter Riders - From Scootering.com

Not wishing to scare anyone too much, but once again the Government seems intent on legislating scooter riders and motorcyclists off of the road...

Before we go any further, remember that what happens in London, often spreads throughout the country, so if you think at first this may not affect you, then please consider the long term effects.

Anyway, the latest Government plan for raising cash is a consultation to consider charging bikes and scooters to enter London.

The Congestion Charge was first introduced in 2003 to combat traffic congestion in the capital, a problem to which Powered Two Wheelers (PTWs) are a solution. After all, us riders simply filter past stationary traffic, rather than wait at the back of queues adding to the pollution of hundreds and thousands of vehicles ticking over while going nowhere.

However, the Transport For London (TfL) website reveals plans to introduce an Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) in London and despite their own website stating, "In central London, TfL buses and taxis contribute a large proportion of emissions on an individual basis because of their high mileage and the dominance of diesel within the fleets. Lorries, coaches and other buses have similar characteristics," and "The majority of cars driving within central London emit less per vehicle although as there are far more of them (over five million unique cars are observed entering central London in an average year) they contribute significantly to emissions," they still continue with, "motorcycles, mopeds and similar vehicles can be extremely polluting on an individual basis but, in total, account for a small proportion of kilometres driven in central London."

The scary stuff continues within their consultation where they ask whether PTWs should be subjected to the same restrictions as other vehicles when entering London, so the call is for everybody on two-wheels to visit the TfL website and complete the consultation, emphasising how much of a solution to congestion and therefore pollution too our PTWs are, whether modern or classic.

If the result doesn't go our way, expect older scooters and motorbikes to be banned or charged to enter London, not only restricting movement for those living in or around the city, but also potentially adding more cars to the roads. And as we mentioned earlier, what happened in London often filters out around the rest of the UK eventually, and none of us want that.

The consultation closes on 9 January 2015 so don't put it off until tomorrow, please [click here](#) and complete the [consultation now](#).

<https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/environment/ultra-low-emission-zone/consultation/intro/view>

Grande Finale for Dutch Rider who crashed in Sweden

On the first of December 2014, an interesting case was brought up in the Court of Falun. It was a verbal hearing between the Swedish Transport Administration and a lawyer representing the Dutch rider Pieter Lankhuijzen who crashed on loose gravel in June 2011 when he was on a motorcycle tour in Sweden.

A fellow rider filmed the tour and also the crash. No warning signs for road work, slippery road or loose gravel can be found in the film. Pieter crashed in a hidden bend due to the huge amount of gravel. Since Pieter couldn't prove that the loose gravel came from the entrepreneur who repaired the road, Pieter agreed to conciliation with 75 % of his claim.

Pieter asked SMC – Swedish Rider Organisation and FEMA member - for help. But, in spite of two separate letters to the Swedish Transport Administration and loads of evidence: a video showing the lack of warning signs and the amount of gravel and also a GPS-log that showed that he was riding within the speed limit, they refused to give him anything at all. In the end SMC helped Pieter to find a lawyer to sue the Swedish Transport Administration.

In the verbal hearing held 1st December the lawyer from the Swedish Transport Administration stated that they are in principal not responsible for the accident -even if the road work not was done in an appropriate way and if this fault led to an accident. In spite of that fact, they take the responsibility to cover the costs if this would be the result of the conciliation.

SMC concludes that even if you have really good proof to support your case (video, witnesses, GPS-log and photos of gravel) the Swedish Transport Administration is not willing to take any responsibility at all. The entrepreneur does not have any evidence for when their work was done and changed the dates several times. In spite of this it is the road user who must prove where the gravel came from. Is it really necessary for a road user in these situations to take samples of the gravel, send it to a laboratory for tests and compare with the gravel the entrepreneur use in maintenance work?

This was a good Christmas gift for a foreign motorcyclist visiting Sweden. The outcome also shows that the motorcycle community can help each other, across the borders. Pieter is a member of MAG Netherlands.

Full article and video on the FEMA website - <http://www.fema-online.eu/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=414&cntnt01returnid=15>

Philip Bradbourn – 1951 - 2014

Philip Bradbourn, the Conservative MEP for the West Midlands since 1999, passed away in December after a short illness.

He was diagnosed with bowel cancer shortly after being re-elected in May and died on the 20th December 2014.

During 2005/2006 when MAG was “battling” against the 3rd European Driving Licence Directive MAG said that, *“Although MAG is an apolitical organisation the Conservative MEP Philip Bradbourn has been the motorcyclists champion in the political sphere in Europe and we will always give credit when credit is due.”*

As the Conservative Transport Spokesman, he presented to the chairman of the Parliament's Transport Committee MAGs 2,500 strong petition against the directive.

He supported MAG at its major demo in Birmingham, pointing out that riders were revved up over "draconian" legislation, that British Bikers were being, “Driven Round The Bend By Europe”.

He submitted amendments, including a final amendment on the day of the European Parliament vote calling for the rejection of the directive.

He said at that time, *“This pointless and bureaucratic legislation will cause real problems for motorcycle enthusiasts in the UK.”* something which is becoming clearer since the legislation was introduced in 2013.

Our sincere sympathies to his family and loved ones!

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