

# Network

July 2014

## A networking tool for Activists and other interested parties

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## EDITORIAL

You'll see an important news release immediately following this editorial. I'm going to refrain from comment as Leon & Lembit have summed things up far more articulately than I could.

At the last NC meeting it was decided that the MAG logo at the top of this edition of Network, which I've hitherto used but which I've always hated, has now been adopted as the corporate MAG logo so from August I'll be adopting the pipes logo to head up this publication - yeah.

High Beech Tea Hut, a bit of a motorcycling institution in Epping Forest, now risks being spoiled because the City of London Corporation, instead of renewing the current holders licence, are putting it out to tender. Amazingly, despite refusing permission for several years for water and electricity to the site, these are now requirements for those submitting tenders! I find it sad how so many of our wonderful, simple things in life just 'have' to be changed by corporate business - change just for the sake of it and rarely, it seems, for the better. Do what you can to support this campaign please.

A four-fold increase in the maximum fines available to magistrates is to be introduced so The Guardian has reported so, from £500 to £2,000 would apply to driving a motor cycle without a protective helmet and £2,500 to £10,000 would include speeding on the motorway!!

Finally, hope to see some of you at Calne on the 26<sup>th</sup>, meanwhile Ride safe and free,

AG.

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**Acknowledgements: George Legg. Trevor Baird. Scouse. Phil McFadden. Dave Wigham. Dave French. Plus anyone else I've forgotten.**

**Something for Network?????? Contact: [AnneGaleMAG@aol.com](mailto:AnneGaleMAG@aol.com) subject heading 'Network'.**



**MAG**

**News Release**

## **Plan 2B or not 2B? That is the question**

*MAG 'amazed' at BMF support for 'Killer' Roundabout scheme*

26<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) has expressed amazement at the British Motorcyclists Federation (BMF) 'inexplicable' decision to cave in to the Council's proposals to build a dangerous roundabout in the town. MAG Chairman, John Mitchell, has said 'if this insane Bedford scheme goes ahead it strikes a killer blow against motorcyclists' rights to have their safety considered in line with other vulnerable road user groups such as cyclists. I can't understand how a riders' group like the BMF can possibly be supporting it, unless they really have failed to grasp what this scheme is all about – and that it's a potential killer.'

The latest plan to introduce what are known as 'turbo roundabout' principles in central Bedford were hastily drawn up by pro-cycling group Sustrans last month, after MAG caused Bedford to abandon two earlier proposals on grounds of safety. The proposal includes two 'pinch points' to 'squeeze' traffic into a narrowed channel on a roundabout used by 25,000 vehicles per day. Unglamorously known as 'Plan 2B,' it also uses raised 'spurs' of kerbing to funnel all vehicles into two channels on opposite sides of the roundabout. These channels are less than half the width of the current lane.

MAG's Policy Adviser, former BMF Chairman Dr Leon Mannings first challenged Bedford's proposals in April 2013. Dr Mannings says, 'the Council is doing this in the hope it would make cyclists 'feel safer'. MAG has no issue with schemes to help cyclists feel safer - unless the measures have significant adverse impacts on safety for those on scooters, mopeds and motorbikes – and indeed bicycles. Sadly, ALL the proposals have included new obstructions which many experts in the motorcycling AND cycling

fraternities regard as new hazards that could seriously injure or even kill bikers on machines with motors or pedals.'

Dr Mannings and his colleague Lembit Öpik, MAG's Director of Comms & Public Affairs have had a series of talks with the DfT to discuss MAG's objections: the DfT is allocating £420k of taxpayers' money to the scheme via their Cycle Safety Programme. MAG described the sessions as 'seemingly productive.' Thus it came as a total surprise when they learned that Graeme Hay, the BMF's newly appointed Government Relations Executive, had submitted a report in support of Plan 2B. Leon adds 'up till that point, the BMF had expressed no interest in Bedford's proposals, nor had they had any involvement at all with discussions during the preceding 18 months. Indeed, Mr Hay had only taken office the week in which he wrote and submitted his report.' The DfT has now given Bedford the go-ahead to implement the scheme and the council has told MAG that they will start work in the next two weeks.

In response, MAG has insisted that Bedford conduct a public consultation about the new proposal as it is so significantly different to the original proposals. Leon adds 'this scheme is crazy. If the BMF continues to support it, I have to assume they simply haven't understood the basic dangers of it. MAG will campaign for Plan 2B NOT to be built, despite the BMF's apparent last minute support for a scheme that can kill riders.'

ENDS.

Contact either Lembit Öpik or Leon Mannings via MAG Central Office.

Tel. 01926 844064. [www.mag-uk.org](http://www.mag-uk.org)

Editors Notes:

- The planned scheme is being considered at the Union Street junction with Clapham road. The most recent design is a new proposal, and has been created by pro-cycling group Sustrans.
- The new proposal was a response to MAG's successful bid to request Bedford to abandon two other proposals.
- A key concern for MAG is that the latest proposal involves the creation of two new pinch points on a roundabout which handles a high volume of traffic - approximately 25,000 vehicles per day. Plan 2B includes raised spurs of kerbing to funnel all vehicles into channels on opposite sides of the roundabout. These massively reduce the room for manoeuvre for vehicles under threat of collision from other vehicles.
- Plan 2A also contained two raised kerb lane dividers - Plan 2B has two new pinch points with raised kerb spurs built out from traffic islands to encourage an early choice of lane before exit points.
- MAG was not informed prior to Graeme Hay of the BMF submitting a report, even though MAG had clearly led on the issue with no request for involvement nor apparent interest in the BMF until the last minute. The BMF has attended none of

the discussions about the issue during the preceding 18 months. Mr Hay had only taken office at the beginning of the week in which he submitted his report.

- As Bedford's application for the DfT's Cycle Safety Programme grant shows here (<http://is.gd/b59oNf>) – they had to go back ten years to find eight serious casualties on a junction that accommodates 25,000 vehicles per day, of which only 2 were cyclists, 3 were pedestrians alongside 1 motorcyclist and 2 in cars.
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## High Beech Tea Hut Campaign

Just some background to let those who have never attended this venue in Epping Forest understand the situation. The forest was once a Royal forest but is now run by the City of London Corporation but was gifted to her people by Queen Victoria for them all to enjoy. All, being the operative word here.

In February 1928, an oval cinder circuit to the rear of the Kings Oak public house in High Beach village was the venue for Britain's first motorcycle speedway meeting. From this point on the tea huts became a regular feature and the High Beech hut has stayed in the same family for over 80 years. Bradley's hut as it is known is a simple place, with no running water or electricity but one of the few places within the M25 where you can get a real mug of tea and a thick slice of home-made cake on a real plate for less than 2 quid.

Generations of forest dwellers and bikers have made the regular trip to this woodland location, basic as it is, and a real community spirit exists there. It's the only place that you regularly see horse riders, cyclists, ramblers, families in cars and often two or three generations of the same family on classic and modern bikes mixing together. Many MAG runs have started from there and Easter egg and demo rides, it's a part of our history as much as all the other parts of it's varied community.

Then the City of London Corporation declared that the lease is not being renewed this year and going out to tender. Nothing unusual there but there are suddenly major changes required, including the provision of toilets (despite not giving permission for several years now for water and electricity to be supplied to the site), unofficial hints have allegedly been made that "it's too cheap" that "it needs modernising..." when the campaigners have been discussing this with the Corporation.

So yet another part of our everyday motorcycling and cultural heritage is to be homogenised and tarted up, prices raised and the little guy gets shafted again. Six days a week the hut is open, and rain or shine the welcome is the same. If Bradley loses the lease you can be sure based on other venues in the forest that have changed hands, bikes will no longer be welcome or have the same freedom to be parked where they are best to be parked, but forced into bays, prices raised, paper cups and plates and mass produced food ... you know the score another venue lost to corporate greed.

To get the latest info go to:-

Facebook Campaign Page - Save the Tea Hut

[https://www.facebook.com/pages/Save-the-Tea-hut/646435558773761?ref\\_type=bookmark](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Save-the-Tea-hut/646435558773761?ref_type=bookmark)

Website <http://savetheteahut.com/>

By the time you see this the petition, of over 7000 signatories in two weeks, will have been handed in but the campaign will be on-going;

Petition Page

<https://www.change.org/en-GB/petitions/superintendent-of-epping-forest-and-the-city-of-london-leave-the-bikers-tea-hut-in-high-beech-alone-do-not-put-it-out-to-tender-and-recognise-this-place-as-a-part-of-local-history-and-to-start-listening-to-the-people-that-use-the-forest>

***[MAG's National Committee is fully supporting this campaign and would like you to take a look at the Save the Tea Hut page, AG]***

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### **MAG gets an award - YOUTH BIKE.**

Andy Carrott attended the Youth Bike Presentation Awards on 28<sup>th</sup> June and, in his own words, "collected, on behalf of MAG, the Rod Gibson Memorial Trophy, presented to an individual or organisation that has shown a particularly high level of support for Youth Bike. It's a particularly impressive trophy and will be on display on the Youth Bike Stand at Stormin.

Mid Lincs MAG members started Youth Bike and some have been (and still are) trustees of the charity. Nationally MAG gives free affiliation and support with insurance.

I think we could do more to promote Youth Bike but that's for another time. I just want to tell you a story about one of this year's teams. A local group from a school for kids with learning difficulties (e.g. downs syndrome) entered a Grease themed bike. One of their team does not speak. He can but he won't. They have tried everything but he still will not speak. Until, that is, he started to help working on the bike. His first word was "hammer", his second "bike", and apparently he now talks about the bike at length. The school are chuffed to bits and all the kids have really improved with their involvement."

Brilliant – makes it all very worthwhile.

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### **On 10th June, the Guardian reported:**

A fourfold increase in the maximum fines available to magistrates is to be introduced – meaning motorway speeders could be forced to pay up to £10,000, and disorderly drunks £4,000, the government has said.

Courts will also be able to levy unlimited fines for the first time for the most serious crimes dealt with in the lower courts – such as environmental offences – which at present attract penalties of up to £5,000 or more.

Justice Minister Jeremy Wright said the dramatic hike – the first since 1991 and for which the government paved the way in legislation passed two years ago – would give magistrates the "greater powers" needed to punish offenders.

But motoring groups said the new fines were disproportionate and could put people off challenging unfair speeding tickets.

Magistrates' court guidelines set out how the appropriate level of punishment should be determined according to the seriousness of the offence.

Under the proposed changes the maximums in each category will increase as follows:

**Level 1** Up from £200 to £800. Includes unauthorised cycle racing on public ways.

**Level 2** From £500 to £2,000. Includes driving a motor cycle without a protective helmet.

**Level 3** From £1,000 to £4,000. Includes the sale of alcohol to a drunk person or being drunk and disorderly in a public place.

**Level 4** From £2,500 to £10,000. Includes speeding on the motorway.

Mr Wright said: "Financial penalties set at the right level can be an effective way of punishing criminals and deterring them from further offending.

"Magistrates are the cornerstone of our justice system and these changes will provide them with greater powers to deal with the day-to-day offences that impact their local communities."

The amount of fines collected reached an all-time high of £284m at the end of 2012/13 and remains on an upward course.

Edmund King, president of the Automobile Association, criticised the changes.

"For the vast majority of drivers the prospect of the existing £2,500 fine is a pretty good deterrent against excessive speeding on the motorway," he told the Daily Telegraph.

"We would not condone excessive speeding in any way but fines have to be proportionate to the offence and one has to question whether increasing the fines fourfold is proportionate, and it probably is not.

"If we had more cops in cars on the motorway that would be a much more effective deterrent."

Rupert Lipton, director of the National Motorists Action Group, said it was "disproportionate and draconian".

"I think it will have a serious chilling effect. We will find motorists will be deterred from going to court where they don't believe they are guilty of an offence and there is a potential challenge," he told the newspaper.

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 allowed for magistrates to be give the power to impose unlimited fines for some offences but the government is only now tabling legislation to put that into effect.

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## **Medication and Driving**

A survey by Brake and Direct Line has revealed one in six drivers ignore warnings not to drive, or don't check the label at all, when taking medication. Many prescription and over-the-counter medication can impair driving, so Brake advises drivers to always check the label or consult a doctor or pharmacist.

The full report can be found at: <http://brake.org.uk/news/1237-dlmedication-jun14>

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**POLICE** have all sorts of inconspicuous vehicles in their armoury against road traffic offenders, some of which can be notoriously difficult to spot on the roads. Less so this one, just drafted in by Avon and Somerset Police to use in an operation targeting motorcyclists.

The Atom makes a claimed 350bhp and does 0-60mph in 2.5 seconds.



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### **Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM)**

The IAM have a Poll running on Motoring/Riding holidays abroad at: <http://www.iam.org.uk/media-and-research/research/poll>

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### **Motorcycles and Scooters - A cure to UK congestion?**

“It’s a bold statement... motorcycles are the cure to UK congestion” says a report on the Get On website.

This is something that we have just known, however it is now backed up by empirical studies which proves the case.

There is nothing like a bit of empirical study to back up what you know!

The study, by research company Transport and Mobility, Leuven, investigated the impact of increasing the percentage of motorcycles on traffic flow on a stretch of busy commuter road leading into Brussels. They looked at not only traffic flow but also air quality as improvements in this area were assumed to take place if congestion was reduced.

The results prove that not only do bikes save time for those riding them they save time for everyone else too! As a result even if you don’t decide to jump from your car on to two wheels, you should be thanking those who do because each one is actually saving you time. Fact.

The team also looked at emissions and found that as well as the fact that total external emission costs of motorcycles (all pollutants combined) is 21% lower than that of an average car, when 10% of the traffic is made up of bikes a 6% reduction of emissions overall is achieved, with 5% of this due simply to smoother traffic flow and higher average speeds.

In the UK over 80% of daily commuter car traffic is single occupancy so Get On sees no reason why a 10% shift to bikes isn't achievable. With this comes smoother traffic flow for everyone, a 60%+ saving in journey times and a 6% reduction in overall emissions. That's not mentioning all the cost savings those who switch to bikes make or the time savings either.

Get On is the motorcycle industry campaign aimed at providing people with everything they need to know about getting their licence to ride a motorcycle or scooter

Full Article is at - <http://www.geton.co.uk/motorcycles-and-scooters-a-cure-to-uk-congestion/>

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### **The Disappearing Tax Disc and what it means to you.....**

From 1 October 2014, the paper tax disc will no longer need to be displayed on a vehicle windscreen.

You can apply [online](#) to tax or SORN your vehicle using your 16 digit reference number from your vehicle tax renewal reminder (V11) or 11 digit reference number from your log book (V5C)

To drive or keep a vehicle on the road you will still need to get vehicle tax and DVLA will still send you a renewal reminder when your vehicle tax is due to expire. This applies to all types of vehicles including those that are exempt from payment of vehicle tax.

### **Buying a vehicle**

From 1 October, when you buy a vehicle, the vehicle tax will no longer be transferred with the vehicle. You will need to get new vehicle tax before you can use the vehicle.

You can tax the vehicle using the New Keeper Supplement (V5C/2) part of the vehicle registration certificate (V5C) online or by phone - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Alternatively, you may wish to visit a Post Office® branch.

### **Selling a vehicle**

If you sell a vehicle after 1 October and you have notified DVLA, you will automatically get a refund for any full calendar months left on the vehicle tax.

### **Vehicle tax refunds**

You will no longer need to make a separate application for a refund of vehicle tax. DVLA will automatically issue a refund when a notification is received from the person named on DVLA vehicle register that the:

- vehicle has been sold or transferred
- vehicle has been scrapped at an Automated Treatment Facility
- vehicle has been exported
- vehicle has been stolen

- vehicle has been removed from the road and the person on the vehicle register has made a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN)
- person on the vehicle register has changed the tax class on the vehicle to an exempt duty tax class

### **Checking the tax status of a vehicle**

You can check the tax status of any vehicle [online](#). This can also be used for rental vehicles.

### **Cost of Theory Tests reduced by 25%**

The fee for a car driving theory test will fall by £6 in October this year, taking the cost of a test from £31 to £25, with a further drop of £2 in October 2015.

Theory test fees for motorcycles and other categories of vehicle will also be reduced. The changes have been confirmed following a public consultation.

**Full report on:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/learner-drivers-to-pay-less-for-theory-tests-from-october-2014>

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## **AROUND GB AND IRELAND**

### **The North East.**

#### **Loss of Police Motorcycle section and Cutbacks.**

A number of thinking bikers have been concerned in the North East for some time at the apparent lack of Police Motorcycles out and about. The Police Motorcycle sections and local motorcyclist have always had excellent relationships. Durham Police Motorcycle section run Bikewise and offer have offered advanced riding observations and training FOC for some years. Cleveland have operated a similar system with their Observed Rides at their Ridewell event. It was therefore very sad news to hear that Cleveland and Durham had combined their bike sections and cut them back dramatically.

During planning for the Blyth Easter Egg run our man Tony Rea (Blyth Rep) was shocked to find out that Northumbria Police has disbanded their Motorcycle section completely. Now I'm sure I don't have to even state the benefits of a Police bike section not just for the public but us bikers too. Much dismay and discussion has taken place recently at MAG meetings and there are rumours of a summer demo to support and even try and convince the powers that be to not cut back any further the Police sections and to get Northumbria to reinstate a proper bike section.

Dave Wigham. North East Regional Rep.

#### **West Midlands Police is offering FREE motorcycle marking in a bid to beat bike thieves.**

West Midlands Police has teamed up with nine motorcycle dealers across the region to offer free motorcycle marking in a bid to beat bike thieves.

The dealers have already given out 1,000 marking kits (RRP £30), they have 300 remaining. Each kit contains a special DNA fluid which is painted on to your bike. The fluid is not detectable by the naked eye but contains micro dots that are then unique to your bike.

Sergeant Andy Gregory from WMP Crime Reduction department, said: “We are working tirelessly to stop motorcycle theft in the West Midlands and to shut down the market for the sale of stolen vehicle parts. The more bikes we can get marked, the bigger the deterrent for would-be bike thieves and the more likely we can track where bike parts are being stolen from and sent to. This knowledge helps us catch bike thieves and handlers as well as helping us reunite owners with their bikes if they get stolen. I would encourage as many motorcycle owners as possible to make an appointment to get their bikes marked.”

If you're interested, please call one of the following dealers to make an appointment:

Highway Motorcycles in Wolverhampton - 01902 773608  
Black Country Motorcycles in Dudley Port 0121 522 2525  
Streetbike in Halesowen - 0121 506 6800  
Sheldon Motorcycles - 0121 743 3506  
Kestrel Honda in Coventry - 024 7670 3900  
Birmingham Kawasaki - 0121 374 2895  
West Midlands Motorcycles in Brierley Hill - 01384 78467  
Shire Oak Motorcycles in Walsall - 01543 361955  
Stourbridge Motorcycle Centre - 07803 609216

The kits are paid for by money under the Proceeds of Crime Act - which allows the police to seize and sell criminal's assets and then plough the money back into fighting crime.

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### **Northern Ireland Matters**

Two proposed changes to Northern Ireland “roads” Legislation are contained in a consultation on Continuous Insurance Enforcement (CIE) and a Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill.

The Continuous Insurance proposal will see Northern Ireland come into line with the rest of the UK. Continuous Insurance was introduced in GB in June 2011 and MAG UK replied to a government consultation back in 2005 and at that time did not agree with the new measures as outlined in that consultation.

Under the proposed CIE scheme in Northern Ireland:

The vehicle registration authority would work in partnership with the Motor Insurers' Bureau to identify uninsured vehicles. Motorists would receive a letter telling them that their vehicle appears to be uninsured and warning them that they will be fined unless they take action.

If the keeper fails to insure the vehicle they would be given a £100 fine.

If the vehicle remains uninsured - regardless of whether the fine is paid – further action would be taken. If the vehicle is on public land it could then be clamped, seized and destroyed. Alternatively court action could be taken, with the offender facing a fine of up to £1,000.

Seized vehicles would only be released when the keeper provided evidence that the registered keeper is no longer committing the offence of having no insurance and the person proposing to drive the vehicle away is insured to do so.

***Vehicles with a valid Statutory Off Road Notice (SORN) would not be required to be insured.***

The Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill as proposed will see a major change in road traffic legislation which will see Northern Ireland not catching up with the rest of the UK but bringing a different structure on Learner Driving and Drink Drive limits.

Basically this would see the introduction of a lower blood alcohol limit for drivers, with a more stringent limit for new drivers and professional drivers. It also proposes changes for learner drivers through its reform of driver training and testing, a Graduated Learner Driving Scheme as well as restrictions on new drivers.

*And a requirement for quad bike users to wear helmets while on a public road.*

MAG Northern Ireland is well aware of the proposals and with others in the motorcycle community whilst sitting on a stakeholders group for the introduction of the 3rd European Driving Licence Directive, participated in the effect the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill would have on motorcycling.

The effect would not be that great with no changes to the way learner riders progress through CBT (CBT in Northern Ireland differs mainly in that a minimum of four hours on road riding is required – in GB it is 2 hours) and the graduated route to a full motorcycle licence or direct access.

Riders like learner drivers, would still have to complete a log book when learning and produce this when taking a test. This log book similar would appear to contain modules that learners must be taught and hopefully that will contain something regarding looking out for ALL vulnerable road users – motorcyclists!

Full details of these changes can be found on the links below.

The Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill - <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/News-and-Media/Press-Releases/Committee-to-Examine-Proposed-New-Road-Safety-Legislation/>

Public Consultation on a Proposed Scheme of Continuous Insurance Enforcement (CIE) & Related Matters - <http://www.doeni.gov.uk/publications-details.htm?docid=9774>

MAG members in Northern Ireland can join a “MAG Norn Iron” Facebook group to discuss issues such as these - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/633928286700462/>

## **Oxfordshire**

Motorbike safety 08:36 on 30<sup>th</sup> June: Phil Gayle Breakfast presenter, BBC Radio Oxford

On the show <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radiooxford>> this morning, the number of motorbike accidents attended by Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance <<http://www.tvcaa.org/>> has increased by a quarter in the past year.

A third of those were on Oxfordshire's roads. I'm asking, what's the best way to keep bikers safe?

Join in the debate on Facebook <<https://www.facebook.com/bbcoxford>> and Twitter <<http://www.twitter.com/bbcoxford>>

### **MAG Ireland - Roadrunner**

Our friends at MAG Ireland have a free e-mail newsletter which you can sign up for.

RoadRunner is the official MAG Ireland e-mail newsletter. Which they have just redesigned for better viewing on phones and tablets. It's available only to subscribers, and contains a mix of articles, updates on MAG Ireland, information on events etc.

See what you're missing and sign up for FREE here: <http://www.magireland.org/roadrunner/>

### **Scotland - Police Warning to Motorcyclists**

Police in Scotland are reminding all motorcyclists to ensure they take all preventative measures and make sure they use all the appropriate safety clothing following two serious accidents in June during the good weather.

Inspector Neil Hewitson from the Roads Policing Unit said: "Do not be reckless when putting on your clothing, helmet, footwear and other equipment. Make sure you are dressed and prepared accordingly. We understand that the warm weather might make these protective clothing hot and uncomfortable but at the end of the day they are designed to save your life. It should be a no brainer really. Put up with a little discomfort in return for your safety and protection. It is a risk that no one needs to take.

Mog Morrison on the New Forest MAG Facebook group picked up on this advice from the police and asked, "On a personal level I agree, but is this the start of compulsory protective clothing? - Will insurance companies use these statements from the Police when injury claims are submitted. What do you think about it?"

The first two comments on the page said, "This is what happens when people keep banging on about appropriate clothing. Can't they see where this will end?"

"This is what happens when people have accidents and sustain injuries for the same reasons. It's an easy target to say you must take care and wear all the right gear and both Police and insurance companies have and will probably look at this further. If you get rid of the problem, i.e. work to prevent accidents from happening in the first place, then you'll have the best chance of fending off blanket laws and policies which are proposed or better still have a better chance of new countermeasures not even being thought of in the first place! These statements only come about because people have accidents...and they are sometimes rightly reinforced by people saying we should be wearing protective clothing just in case we do have an accident."

With a good discussion following – so what are your thoughts!

<http://www.gallowaygazette.co.uk/news/local-headlines/police-warning-to-motorcyclists-1-3453697>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/NewForestMAG/permalink/310935445730219/>

## **Wales**

Remember Wales Chief Constable, Richard Brunstrom, a few years back? Dyfed-Powys Police Commissioner Christopher Salmon has been asked by MAG South Wales Regional Rep, Phil McFadden, not to "demonise" bikers.

Last week commissioner Christopher Salmon spoke out about his concerns at the number of deaths of bikers in the force area — nine have died so far this year.

He called on all road users to behave responsibly, and said some motorcyclists "leave behind broken families for the sake of a moment's thrill".

However, in an open letter to Mr Salmon, Phil writes: "Your concern at the increase in motorcyclist fatalities in traffic incidents is welcome. But your phrase is unfortunate as it could lose (you) popularity among a large population of deeply aggrieved riders who are extremely aware that, although there is a hooligan element of irresponsible racers who should be playing at track days and not the public highway, the vast majority of riders are responsible and unburdened by a death wish.

We would appreciate you not using phrases which demonise us and could even encourage a public perception that biker deaths are our fault and therefore justifiable."

He added that statistics showed that almost half of all accidents involving a biker were caused by the car driver.

In response, Mr Salmon said every death on the road meant misery, and that he was right to highlight the issue of road safety, something every road user had to put first.

Read more: <http://www.southwales-eveningpost.co.uk/Don-t-bikers-bad/story-21215059-detail/story.html#ixzz368BCB0QA>

And: The other item from Wales... Wynford the Whale on Facebook. Phone a bit slow... Does this work? <https://mbasic.facebook.com/wynfordthewhale?ref=stream&refid=17>

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## **MAG - New PACTS Members**

PACTS (Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety) is pleased to announce that MAG have joined PACTS.

PACTS says that: *"The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) represents the interests and rights of Powered Two Wheeler (PTW) riders in the UK. A core aim is to help ensure that the safety and legitimate interests of PTW riders are accorded equal levels of attention and respect along with other Vulnerable Road Users.*

*A core belief for MAG members is that all road users – especially the most vulnerable ones – can, and should, take as much responsibility as possible for their own safety. Success for us is to heighten awareness of the similarities rather than differences between riders of all single track vehicles – and irrespective of whether they are powered by motors or pedals – or both. We also hope to help ensure*

*that fresh thinking about road safety is increasingly evidence based, and that PTW riders are given equal consideration in the policy development processes from which new proposals emerge.*

*MAG has re-joined PACTS for two key reasons: The use of single-track vehicles such as motorcycles, scooters and bicycles offers many benefits that are being better recognised than ever as such in environmental, social and economic terms. The need to optimise the safe use of two wheelers has also never been greater, and MAG is hoping to help PACTS deliver improvements along those lines."*

The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) is a registered charity and an Associate Parliamentary Group. Its charitable objective is "To protect human life through the promotion of transport safety for the public benefit". Its aim is to advise and inform members of the House of Commons and of the House of Lords on air, rail and road safety issues. It brings together safety professionals and legislators to identify research-based solutions to transport safety problems having regard to cost, effectiveness, achievability and acceptability. In recent years it has paid increasing attention to the links between transport safety, sustainability and public health.

[www.pacts.org.uk](http://www.pacts.org.uk)

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#### **MAG On Twitter**

Just a reminder that you can get your "fix" of MAG on Twitter

<https://twitter.com/MAGUKCentral>

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#### **Wheels to Work Association - Scooter and Moped Insurance request for 'Expression of Interest'**

Wheels to Work Schemes provide transport, typically scooters and mopeds, enabling people to access employment or education opportunities that would otherwise be unobtainable.

There are currently 38 schemes operating in the UK.

An increased number of schemes recognise the potential target figure of 60 throughout the country, all of which could be expected ultimately to operate in the region of 10 scooters per scheme.

Causing schemes to move to greater levels of sustainability will be achieved by the sharing of best practice and by creating procurement contracts for the products and services required by individual schemes whereby they can benefit from the prices derived from a national arrangement.

Expressions of interest are now invited from organisations wishing to become involved in a tender process for fully comprehensive road cover insurance.

Full details are in a background document which can be obtained by:

e-mailing [info@wheels2workassociation.org](mailto:info@wheels2workassociation.org) or

applying in writing to: The Chairman, The Wheels to Work Association, 1 Rye Hill Office Park, Birmingham Road, Allesley, Coventry CV5 9AB.

Expressions of interest to be involved in the tender process can be signalled by returning the completed background document as a hard copy to the above address by 31st July 2014.

Wheels to Work Association, 1 Rye Hill Office Park, Birmingham Road, Allesley, Coventry CV5 9AB

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### **FEMA meeting**

BLS Iceland hosted FEMA meeting in Reyjavik which took place on 31st May last.

Pat van Aalst, MAG National Treasurer, represented The Motorcycle Action Group.

The meeting discussed and adopted a number of changes to the way in which FEMA is run, while upcoming EU proposals on Integrated Transport Systems were also considered by the delegates.

Work on a number of internal projects was discussed and there was an in depth debate of the proposed regulations on mandatory protective clothing.

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### **Touring Europe**

Are you planning a motorcycle tour around Europe? Useful information about rules in traffic in all EU/EES countries can be found in 28 languages here:

[http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road\\_safety/going\\_abroad/germany/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/going_abroad/germany/index_en.htm)

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### **Lowest road deaths ever**

In 2013 road deaths decreased by 2% compared to 2012, to 1,713. This is the lowest figure since national records began in 1926.

<http://www.roadsafe.com/news/article.aspx?article=2280>

### **London's casualties fall again**

The number of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) on London's roads fell by 23% during 2013 to its lowest level since records began.

<http://www.roadsafe.com/news/article.aspx?article=2275>

### **UK Road Safety Week**

UK Road Safety Week from 9th to 15th June targeted four vulnerable groups with simple but important messages.

<http://www.roadsafe.com/news/article.aspx?article=2266>

### **Simple fund raising opportunity**

If anyone would like to sell any of Ian Mutch's books at their local group meetings or elsewhere he will split the cover price 50/50 with them. All books are £7 except the picture books which is £10

Could be a wonderful earner for your local funds. Books can be picked up by regional reps from NC meetings if you can arrange it with them. Ian Mutch.

## **Location Marker aka MEDstickers**

### **Background**

These stickers came about after a fruitless discussion at the Powys Road safety Partnership, which had been trying to address the issue of notifying emergency services of the location of an RTC. RTC's had occurred and those involved knew they were on a road but not where, or the name (or pronunciation) of the nearest settlement.

Several ideas, verge markers , location numbers painted on the Highway etc. had all proved to be impractical or expensive.

However at a meeting of the Mid Wales MAG branch one of the members came up with the idea of a grid reference on the back of a road sign, bilingual and cheap. The person's name was Medwyn, so MED stickers.

The idea was run past the Powys Road Safety Team, work was completed between the organisations to come up with a design for the sticker and a method of attaching the Grid Reference. It was also agreed to add a description of where the sticker was. MAG sponsored the printing of 100 for a trial.

Powys Road safety team contacted and had discussions with Dyfed Powys Police, The Mid and West Wales Fire Service (MWWFS) and the Welsh Ambulance Services Trust. General agreement was that it was a cheap and effective method of communicating exact locations.

MAG approached the Head of Service for Highways in Powys County Council to gain agreement for a trial, which was done and also spoke to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) regarding costs and agreement to use them on Trunk Roads in Mid Wales.

The Head of Service in Powys County Council actually suggested that they be placed on the metal poles holding up signs as this made them more visible,.

WAG agreed to fund £1,000 for equipment to allow Powys to place the stickers on the Trunk Road.

So far Powys has only placed stickers on its "Ride Safe" signs, but the campaign to raise awareness of the idea has gone nationwide with interest being shown as far away as Yorkshire and Kent.

The MAG members waded through the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and found that markers can be added to road signs if they aid maintenance, and a marker that gives the exact Grid reference is a simple way of aiding personnel to locate road signs.

MAG are still lobbying for wider adoption of these simple yet effective methods of aiding road users of all classes to access assistance easily when needed. They will become mandatory for new road signs in Wales as part of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) when agreed with the Welsh Government and its Agencies.

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