

Network

NOVEMBER 2013

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EDITORIAL.

Short and sweet this month, with only one thing in mind.

Since the inception of MAG UK, its most potent 'weapon' has been its Members and their lobbying, particularly in the form of letter writing.

If you only write one letter this year, let it be to the Ministry of Justice on the pending appeal of Brian Hampton details on the case can be found at:-

http://www.bournemouthecho.co.uk/news/10762379.Jade_Clark_death_crash_driver_to_appeal_against_six_year_sentence/

See below for all the information you need.

Thank you. Ride free, A

Acknowledgements: George Legg. Rowan Publications.

MAG CAMPAIGNS AND NOTICES

A message from John Mitchell, MAG Chairman:

"I'd just like to say thank you to everyone who has taken the time to write to the Attorney General over Brian Hampton's Sentence.

Sadly, it seems like the Government has got the wind up and is now playing 'pass the hot potato' and the Ministry of Justice are now in charge.

Therefore, can I now please ask that you write to:
The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor.
Ministry Of Justice
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ

This is on the recommendation of the Attorney General's office so be sure to mention that in your letters

I will carry on trying to get a personal reply from Dominic Grieve, and use my ministerial contacts to best effect.

Let's keep this going! Thank you! John"

Below is the letter which MAG Chairman, John Mitchell, sent to the Attorney General. The AG Office, however, inform us that our concerns must be directed to the Ministry of Justice (address above). Use this only as a guide, put things in your own words and please keep your letters as short, concise and polite as possible. Many thanks.

Dear

I would like to say how appalled I am to hear that the Law Officers have not deemed Brian Hampton's sentence – for killing Jade Clark and trying to hide the evidence of his crime – worth more than a total of six years in prison.

Worse still, Brian Hampton has appealed against his sentence. He now thinks it's too severe, thanks to yours and the CPS' inaction.

I would like to know if you think the penalties for leaving the scene of the accident, driving while disqualified and driving without insurance are much of a deterrent? To my mind, leaving the scene and leaving her to get hit by another vehicle is tantamount to manslaughter. And there I was thinking Perjury was still an offence under English law. He knows full well that he lied under oath, by saying that he didn't know he'd hit Jade Clark's moped, blaming the damage on a pothole. That really must have been quite a pothole!

Can you honestly tell me that Jade Clark's life was only worth the minimum sentence for causing death by careless driving? Is it because she was a young girl on a moped that hasn't yet had much of a contribution to society?

Maybe you don't think it's your own fault and the judge is free to make his own decisions on sentencing, however I'm sure the officers of Her Majesty's Police Force who used a great amount of resources tracking down a particular Volvo XC90 are feeling sick about the poor sentence as well; and this isn't the only time a driver who's killed a motorcyclist has got away scot-free.

I would like to hope that you will see sense and intervene in this matter.

Yours sincerely

[name]

MAG finds silver lining to bike ban dark cloud in Brent

MAG has made great progress in getting two types of bans on motorcycling lifted in the London borough of Brent. Productive action and discussions between MAG and Brent Council has led to the council changing its original plan to make a one-off ban of motorcycling on Rainsford Road, a permanent measure. Following input from MAG, the Council has now agreed that the ban will be kept as a temporary 'experimental' measure until it is no longer needed. Removing the ban is expected in due course, now that a key aspect of the situation that led to the problems namely the absence of traffic on a brand new road is set to change. (Please see editor's notes below)

Action and input by MAG has also started proceedings that will pave the way to lift the bans that currently exist, on motorcycle access to non TfL bus lanes in the borough.

The Council introduced a one-off ban in Rainsford Road on August 12 as an 'Experimental Scheme', in response to an unprecedented level of problems caused by the anti-social behaviour of a handful of irresponsible motorcyclists. They had turned a new but rarely used road into a race track and stunt arena. Despite huge efforts by the local police and in the face of police vehicles being attacked, the problems continued to upset and endanger residents and users of the nearby Middlesex Hospital.

Now, after productive discussions with MAG, the Council has agreed that the need for the ban will go and it can be lifted in due course. A detailed examination of the situation showed that the road will no longer be left devoid of traffic, as the developer who built it is starting work on the site, as he now has permission to build housing as well as offices.

Speaking for MAG, National Chairman John Mitchell says: "The Rainsford Road situation was more complex than it seemed at face value. MAG deplors any move to restrict motorcycling on any section of public roads, however, we are led to believe that all realistic alternatives had been tried to tackle a huge range of problems caused by an irresponsible few. Now though, after productive engagement with the council, we are confident that a way has been found to lift the Rainsford Road ban in due course, and others that currently apply to the Borough's network of bus lanes."

Editor's notes

Thorough investigation by MAG of Brent Council's decision to ban motorcycles from a backstreet in the London Borough revealed that the situation and the level of problems is unique. Problems included 174 reported bike crashes in a year and a death looked inevitable with bikes doing 80+mph past a hospital into the night. The full list of problems was huge and included attacks on police vehicles. No fatalities so far ruled out the use of automated speed cameras, and traffic calming was out for other reasons. All policing options were considered or tried which left one way to go. CCTV was already there but prosecutions with that evidence required a court case each whereas enforcing traffic signs for an experimental bike ban could be automated.

In ASDA, Quedgeley, Gloucester there are secure motorcycle parking bays. How about getting secure bike parking at Asda stores across the country?

Please write to:
Andy Clarke
Chief Executive
Asda
Southbank,
Great Wilson Street,
Leeds,
LS11 5AD

Please mark your letter 'Private and confidential – addressee ONLY'. That way, only he – or his assistant – will be able to open it. Of course please keep it polite and to the point. That way, our point of view will be taken into consideration. (John)

FEMA

Facing a difficult economical situation, the riders of Europe band together

What affects Europe affects all of its components, including the motorcyclists' organizations. Yet the need to organize and defend themselves has never been so important, as more and more legislations concerning road users are designed at the European level - and not always with the citizens' best interests at heart. In this context of global economical hard times, the whole two-wheelers market is down, the average age of users keeps going up, people have less time and resources to be involved in non-profit organizations... At the same time, the various expenses for running a federation increase, the administrative burdens are multiplying, and new costs come on top. Among them, for instance, the CEN (European Committee for Standardization, where FEMA is involved on the riders-friendly guardrails issue) starts charging NGOs to follow its debates, when it should welcome the users' expertise and work with and for them!

But the rider's community is known for its solidarity. While FEMA's only real resource is the membership fees from the national riders' organizations that compose it, its committee voted at the last meeting on a generous gesture to lower the financial load of some of its members, who are actively contributing to the work but had some trouble keeping up due to the crisis in their own country. At the same time, the committee set up a new lower starting fee to allow smaller organizations, for instance those in Eastern Europe, to unite in the constant fight for riders' rights. FEMA calls all road users in Europe to join their local organization, and for new organizations to join it, as we are stronger together.

Find out more about the different ways of supporting FEMA on their web-site

And

Motorcycling Matters Video

Powered Two-Wheelers play a role in our Society. From sports to tourism, from commuting to small logistics, motorcycles, scooters and other small vehicles belonging to the L-category provide mobility, leisure and opportunities for social inclusion. A role that deserves being recognised and promoted. This video is produced by [ACEM](#), the professional body representing the interests and combined skills of 13 powered two wheelers (PTWs) manufacturers.

To view video go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kRC1NUA9jI>

Dept for Transport

Restricted parking zones urged to be used by councils instead of yellow lines

Local authorities across England are being asked to cut unsightly yellow lines as part of a government drive to rid the streets of clutter.

Local Transport Minister Norman Baker has today (4 October 2013) urged local authorities to think about using restricted parking zones, instead of automatically opting to use yellow lines to control parking, particularly in single streets and environmentally-sensitive areas in towns and cities.

Restricted parking zones require a limited number of signs which tell motorists if they can or can not park and during which times and are considered less intrusive than conventional yellow lines. Many local authorities in England have already adopted restricted parking zones including Cheshire East Council, Cornwall, Slough, Warwickshire, Suffolk and Nottingham.

In a letter to councils, the Transport Minister Norman Baker has encouraged other local authorities across the country to follow suit.

Norman Baker said: No one wants to see unnecessary yellow lines blotting our towns and villages when there is an alternative. They are a clear eyesore that can be intrusive and can have a huge impact on the look and feel of our streets, particularly in historic town centres or conservation areas.

I encourage local authorities to think about the use of restricted parking zones. They can be used to improve the visual impact of the street while providing clear information to motorists.

The department issues help and guidance to councils on the design and implementation of restricted parking zones through chapter 3 of the [Traffic signs manual](#).

September plate change boosts motorcycle sales

"It is encouraging to see that motorcycle sales increased last month, with the September plate change stimulating the market" **said Sue Robinson, Director of the National Motorcycle Dealers Association (NMDA)** which represents motorcycle retailers across the UK.

The latest new motorcycle and scooter figures show sales overall were up 8% against September 2012.

Under 50cc scooter sales were down 12.7% last month, while all larger over 50cc motorcycle sales increased by 11.4%.

Robinson continued "With the 'shoots' of an economic recovery returning to the marketplace a feeling of confidence is fuelling a demand for bigger motorcycles, with an increase of 14.8% in September. This equates to over 1000 more motorcycles being sold in comparison to the same month last year.

"Over the last few months there has noticeable increase in the number of mature customers entering motorcycle dealerships. Many of these established riders have delayed buying a bike during the recession creating pent up demand for these machines. Therefore a return in consumer confidence and financial security is having a positive impact on the sales of motorcycles in this sector.

"September recorded sales growth in almost all motorcycle sectors, with the exception of mopeds, scooters and supersport bikes. These machines are usually bought by younger riders who may not yet be feeling any upturn in the economy.

"The real test for motorcycle sales will come during the winter months when the return of the bad weather puts pressure on registrations."

Driving Standards Agency

End to foreign language driving tests

Driving test candidates will no longer be able to use foreign language voiceovers and interpreters on their test from 7 April 2014.

Over 70% of people supported the withdrawal of foreign language voiceovers and interpreters on tests

The move, announced today (7 October 2013) by Road Safety Minister Stephen Hammond, follows a public consultation.

Currently people can:

- take their car and motorcycle theory tests with a voiceover in 1 of 19 foreign languages.
- use interpreters on theory tests and practical tests

This will stop from 7 April 2014.

"Right skills to use our roads"

Stephen Hammond said: "We want to make sure that all drivers have the right skills to use our roads safely and responsibly. One area where we can help ensure this is by requiring all test candidates to take the test in English or Welsh, the national languages.

"This will help to ensure that all new drivers will be able to understand traffic updates or emergency information when they pass their test. It will also help us to reduce the risk of fraud by stopping interpreters from indicating the correct answers to theory test questions."

Review of foreign language support

The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) consulted earlier this year on a series of proposals reviewing the level of foreign language support available to candidates.

This was in response to concerns about:

- potential road safety implications
- the risk of fraud
- the cost of providing translations

Almost 2,000 people had their say on the proposals.

Support for the withdrawal of foreign languages

More than 70% of the people who responded supported the withdrawal of foreign language voiceovers and interpreters on tests.

Many people agreed that a lack of understanding of the national language meant that some drivers may not be able to:

- understand traffic signs
- speak with traffic enforcement officers
- read details of the rules of the road

There was also support for encouraging candidates to learn the national language to improve social cohesion.

Candidates with special needs

Candidates with dyslexia or other reading difficulties will still be able to take their theory test with an English or Welsh language voiceover.

Candidates who are deaf or have hearing difficulties will still be able to:

- take their theory test in British sign language (BSL)
- take a BSL interpreter with them on their practical test.

And

Changes to motorcycle, lorry and bus driving test rules

Changes will start to be made to some driving test rules for motorcyclists, lorry, bus and coach drivers from January 2014.

The **Driving Standards Agency (DSA)** has published a response to the public consultation about these changes that ran earlier this year.

Lorry, bus and coach drivers

The main changes affecting lorry, bus and coach drivers will be:

- removing the need to use a vehicle with 8-forward gear ratios for large test vehicles (category C)
- allowing people who take a lorry or bus test (category C and D) in an automatic vehicle to get manual entitlement for those vehicles, if they already have a manual entitlement for cars, lorries or buses, with or without trailers (category B, B+E, C, C+E, C1, C1+E, D, D+E, D1+E)

Existing drivers

You can also get this manual entitlement when you exchange or upgrade your licence if you're already a lorry, bus or coach driver and have a manual licence in any of those categories.

These changes will start in January 2014.

Motorcycle riders

From January 2014, DSA will reduce the minimum engine power requirement for medium motorcycles (category A2) from 25kW to 20kW.

There will be more changes from 2019. DSA will:

- raise the minimum engine power requirement for large motorcycles (category A) from 40kW to 50kW

- introduce a minimum mass weight requirement for large motorcycles (category A) of 180kg

AROUND GB

Northern Ireland Executive

Kennedy – significant public support for proposed changes in road racing laws

Regional Development Minister Danny Kennedy is set to proceed with a Bill that would change the law around road racing in Northern Ireland.

Over 860 responses were received to the public consultation on the proposed changes. Overwhelmingly these supported changing the existing legislation to provide race organisers with some flexibility to change the date of their race day or practice sessions where they might otherwise have to be cancelled due to bad weather.

Following unanimous cross party support voiced at a meeting of the Regional Development Committee today, Danny Kennedy said: "Events like the North West 200, Ulster Grand Prix Week and Circuit of Ireland have an enormous following both locally and internationally and they attract tens of thousands of visitors to Northern Ireland every year.

"These events and many other similar motor sport meetings are weather dependent. Following the cancellation of the North West 200 in May this year, I made a firm undertaking to all road race organisers that I would examine the situation and work to provide a solution in time for the 2014 season."

The new arrangements could be in place for the 2014 road racing season as the Minister intends to seek Executive approval to progress the Bill quickly through the Assembly.

The Minister continued: "While the vast majority of people who responded to the consultation were in favour of the changes, a minority expressed concerns about the potential for Sunday racing.

"May I make it clear, the existing Road Races (NI) Order 1986 does not preclude Sunday racing, so the Bill does not seek to break any existing prohibition. It is for race promoters to decide whether they wish to race on a Sunday and to make the necessary application."

"The granting of permission to reschedule a race would only take place in circumstances, such as that experienced this year when heavy snow led to the cancellation of the Circuit of Ireland Easter Stages Rally and torrential rain led to the cancellation of the North West 200 and the Dundrod 150 motor cycle races."

The next stage in the process requires the Executive's approval to introduce this single purpose Bill to the Assembly. Due process will allow the Assembly to debate the issue and decide if the Bill is to proceed.
