

News from the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG)

Padlock your bike at traffic lights?
Crime Epidemic demands strong action

This version: 2016 12 08

Embargo: IMMEDIATE

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK's leading voice for riders' rights, has become a very active participant of the UK's Motorcycle Crime Reduction Group, in the light of dangerous developments in bike crime, with one murder in London and repeated assaults on riders by would-be bike thieves.

MAG has joined forces with the motorcycle industry, the police and insurance firms to tackle the crime wave that is affecting motorcyclists and scooter riders, especially in urban areas. Lembit Öpik is MAG's representative on the Motorcycle Crime Reduction Group (MCRG): 'I've been instructed to take an active part in seeking solutions. With allies it becomes easier. We've agreed to create a joint approach involving riders, manufacturers and the authorities. The London Metropolitan Police found remains of 14 stole Honda 125s in a single raid. Liverpool police recovered a bike with frame number and engine number chiselled off – one of hundreds of similar cases. Riders have bought machines in good faith only to discover they had purchased stolen goods and a man in London was murdered by thugs who wanted to steal his bike from outside his own house.' Violence has now become commonplace, with riders literally being pushed off their motorcycles in petrol stations by yobs trying to snatch their machines. 'What are we supposed to do? Padlock our bikes at traffic lights?' asks Lembit.

The Motor Cycle Industry Association's Chief Executive Officer Steve Kenwood summed it up: 'we've got to privatise the problem, and then present the solution to the State.' Part of that solution is the Master Scheme, which tags bikes in a way which makes them instantly identifiable with the right equipment. This has measurably reduced theft of tagged bikes and increased recovery rates, though that might also explain the increase in thefts of older bikes.

Lembit adds 'the Chair of the MCRG is, I hope, going to address MAG's National Committee in 2017. With organised crime heavily involved with these problems, this is a messy situation. Scooter-enabled crime is also up. It's a battle we'll have to fight as long as there are elements in our country who don't give a damn about other people or their property.'

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