



July 2015 Network

A networking tool for Activists and other interested parties

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Editorial

Its been really busy and productive this last month as you'll see from the amazing outcome for Scotland thanks to Steve Wykes lengthy campaign. He and Lembit's meeting with officials on the 26th June sealed a good deal for learner riders.

Dave Wigham and his members in the North East have had their work cut out fighting the installation of those dreaded and deadly Armadillos that crossed the border in a mass migration from the North West Region.

MAG has also had to take a position on Brake's appeal for a 20mph urban blanket speed limit.

Leon's has prepared an excellent document for use by any of you as and when necessary entitled

Pathways for Progress: Reducing congestion, improving mobility and cutting casualties - Improving policy for Motorcycling and PTW riders.

MAG's Campaigns Team – Leon and Lembit's report tells you what they've been doing.

The above highlights just a little of what's been happening.

In Bristol, we are still waiting to see if us making a stand against the installation of those deadly Toby Bollards (aka quite aptly named tombstones) on one site has been listened to by the authorities. So, please be on the look out locally for any loony proposed road furniture which is likely to put two wheelers – powered or not - in a dangerous situation. I say proposed because once this stuff is installed getting your councils to listen, see any sense and remove said 'furniture' is multiplied many times.

Included in this edition is an advert for two Directors – this time for MAG Media which is responsible for The Road. If you think you're interested please come forward and contact John.

Just had news that, by 2020, Ford Trucks will be fitted with front-mounted cameras. Technology will be pioneered in the US. This is welcome from a motorcyclist's perspective as a pair mounted on the front corners, can look sideways, so drivers can see approaching vehicles at junctions without needing to edge out into traffic.

So with the good news that the increase in motorcycle sales continues I'll see you next month. Any copy for me for Network please email: aine@mag-uk.org with subject heading: Network. Deadline 25th July.

Ride free, AG.

[Acknowledgments: George Legg. Selina Lavendar. Tink Hammond. Dave Wigham. Leon & Lembit. John Mitchell. Ian Mutch.....and anyone else I've forgotten]

Scottish politicians deliver 'common sense' policy shift for learner riders in Scotland

In a landmark example of positive engagement between the Scottish Government and Britain's leading riders' rights organisation, the Motorcycle Action Group and officials in Transport Scotland have confirmed a change to planned regulations, in order to allow learner riders to continue using the existing Forth Road Bridge, even after the new road crossing opens in 2016. The meeting, attended on MAG's behalf by Scottish Representative Steve Wykes and MAG's Comms & Public Affairs Director, Lembit Öpik, was the culmination of a nine month campaign to highlight the problems with closing access to the old bridge to learner riders on bikes of up to 125cc.

Since the new crossing is a designated motorway, the ban on the old crossing would have forced these learners to make an additional 60 mile return journey. The change of heart means a saving of two hours a day for those originally faced with the detour.

Steve Wykes, who represents MAG in Scotland, is delighted with the breakthrough: 'we took the issue to Alex Salmond MP in Westminster and Scottish Minister for Transport and Islands, Derek Mackay. We explained that, while this was probably just an oversight, it had enormous implications for learner riders, who use their bikes for commuting as well as learning. I have to say I'm hugely impressed with the common sense and intelligent engagement displayed by Mr Salmond and Mr Mackay. They did exactly what I had hoped – by listening to our concerns and acting upon them. I cannot praise their approach enough. It actually makes me quite proud of our politicians. It disproves the common assumption that politicians never listen. Alex Salmond and Derek Mackay certainly DID listen and we're very grateful for the sincerity with which they have engaged with us.'

MAG will work with Transport Scotland in the months ahead to ensure the regulations allow all learner riders to continue to use the crossing in the years ahead.

Selina Lavender, Chair of The Motorcycle Action Group, 'This is an excellent result for learner riders. It shows just how effective MAG is, a problem was identified, we spoke to the decision makers, we got riders involved and today we can say that MAG has won another victory for the motorcycling community. We thank the SNP for seeing that common sense prevailed in this instance, Steve Wykes (MAG's Regional Rep for Scotland) for not letting this issue drop and everyone involved in highlighting this issue to the wider audience.'

Contact Steve Wykes on: 07833 264878 & edinburghmag@aol.com

MAG challenges 20mph blanket limit – Press Release 26 June 2015

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) challenges the suggestion by road safety group BRAKE that 20mph should be the urban default speed limit.

MAG recognises that if vehicles don't move at all then there will be no road accidents but between that unrealistic extreme and a free for all there must lie a point of compromise which should be tailored to localised conditions.

MAG recognises the legitimacy of imposing lower limits outside schools and hospitals but questions the reasonableness of 20mph being a national default limit.

People need to get around at a reasonable pace and commerce should not be unreasonably hampered.

MAG considers that 30mph represents a reasonable compromise for most urban environments and challenges BRAKE to defend what it sees as the group's extreme stance on speed limits.

And, Selina, Madam Chair, came up with this interesting article:-

: Do 20mph speed limits actually work? <http://a.msn.com/08/en-gb/BBkn4ys?ocid=se>

Do 20mph speed limits actually work?

Last October, police in Islington began handing out on-the-spot fines to drivers caught breaking the 20mph limit. The London borough was the first to impose blanket 20mph speed restrictions in 2013, following trials on its most dangerous roads. Now Transport for London (TfL) has announced that it will pilot 20mph limits on some of its busiest routes, as part of a commitment to driving down the number of people who die or are seriously injured in road accidents in the capital.

Implicit in all of this is the idea that 20mph speed limits actually work. To reduce casualties they have to reduce speed, but not everyone agrees that they do. Asked whether he thinks Islington's 20mph speed limits have made any difference,

Aidan Farrow, a member of Islington Cycling Club who cycles thousands of miles on the roads every year, says he doesn't think so. "My experience is that they're ignored by many drivers," he says. "I don't think they're enforced and I don't think that drivers realise they're there a lot of the time."

Statistics collected by the council do suggest traffic has slowed, but only marginally. Before 20mph limits were introduced, 85% of the traffic on Islington's main roads was travelling at an average of 28mph. After the limits were introduced, this average decreased by just 1mph to 27mph.

Average speed

However, before and after surveys covered less than a year all told. Results from Bristol and Brighton's pilots of 20mph limits tell a similar story, with daytime speeds in Bristol dropping by around 1mph to an average of 23mph. In Brighton, the council saw a 1mph decrease a year after 20mph speed limits were introduced in 2013, although the average speed of traffic on central roads was already 20mph.

Farrow's feeling is that the limits would be broken less often if they were better designed to carry traffic at 20mph and he may not be far off the mark. The type of restrictions most councils are now considering are cheaper, sign-only limits - as opposed to "zones" incorporating traffic-calming features. After reviewing the evidence, the authors of a 2014 report by Steer Davies Gleave for the London Borough of Merton found better evidence for zones reducing speed and collisions than for sign-only limits. However, a 2014 review published in the Journal of Public Health found "convincing evidence" from 10 studies for both 20mph zones and limits in reducing speeds and accidents.

Collecting the evidence is problematic in the first place, as Ian Roberts, an injuries expert at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, points out. "In the perfect world, what we might do is take the whole of Britain and randomly allocate parts to have 20mph zones, or not, and that would be the best possible evidence," he says. "You can do that for treatments in the NHS - you can randomise one patient to receive treatment or not - but it's very difficult to randomise areas of Britain to different transport policies. So for most policy decisions you have to settle for less than the best."

Safer roads

As far as Roberts is concerned, there is already good enough evidence - for policy purposes anyway - to show that 20mph zones will reduce serious injuries if they reduce car speeds. But what's most convincing, he says, is the basic physics. A car hitting a pedestrian at 20mph will cause less damage

than at 30mph or 40mph because it carries less energy into the collision. There are even models that predict more precisely the risk of death associated with different speeds. However, the predictions will only pan out if everyone actually drives at the lower speed and Roberts has doubts about the effectiveness of 20mph limits without traffic-calming measures.

So are councils still considering zones? According to Brighton and Hove Council, some phase one areas of its 20mph programme covered pre-existing 20mph zones and it will seek to introduce further measures on streets where speeds might not improve. That said, results from the council's 20mph programme already look promising: casualties are down 12% from an average of 372 in 2010-2013 to 327 in 2013-2014 and, so far, no one has been killed in a collision on the affected roads. On the other hand, it's hard to come to solid conclusions based on data from a single year, especially compared to years in which there was on average only one road death.

To add to the evidence on 20mph limits, the Department for Transport has now commissioned a three-year, £715,000 study on their effectiveness, which will bring together data from different regions as well as new research carried out on the roads. Results are due in 2017.

Meanwhile, in Bristol, a pilot 20mph programme has already been extended city-wide in a £2.3m sign-only scheme. But driving instructor Julie Roberts worries that blanket 20mph limits are contributing to dangerous driving on certain roads. "We're being overtaken or we're experiencing aggressive behaviour from other road users," she says. "We need to find ways to change driver attitudes so that they understand that 20mph is seen as the appropriate speed in urban areas." She thinks change will be slow without any street furniture to support the signs.

Active lifestyles

It's not just about improving safety and reducing casualties, though. Lucy Saunders, who works as a public health specialist for TfL, says it should be just as much about encouraging people out of their cars to lead more active lifestyles by walking and cycling. However, she admits it's not easy to prove that 20mph schemes have these wider health benefits. "I think if you did some data collection now and then went back in 10 years to those same streets, you might be able to see some differences, but over that 10-year period you're probably going to have changing norms across the whole of society – changes in vehicles, changes in investment in cycling infrastructure – so it will be hard to say 'Oh, you know, it's 20mph signs that made the real difference.'"

A subscriber to the health and fitness benefits of active transport, Farrow says cycling in Islington is "a no-brainer", despite the potential risks. "I'm nowhere near the point where I wouldn't do it because I thought it was dangerous," he says, despite having been involved in a few minor incidents himself. Incidentally, a study of 53 cycling fatalities that occurred in London between 2007-2011 found that around half were crashes involving HGVs where speed was not a major factor. However, speed seems more likely to have been a contributing factor when cars were involved.

19mph limits

Elsewhere in Europe, Paris and Milan have announced plans to introduce 30kph (19mph) speed restrictions. Spain has gone further - recent changes to the country's road traffic laws mean that 30kph limits will soon apply in most urban areas. The plans are supported by the European Transport Safety Council, which advises the European commission and has called for lower speed limits across all residential areas. In the US, New York City has reduced its default speed limit from 30mph to 25mph and other US states look to be following suit.

As for whether 20mph limits work, it depends how you define "work". There's no question that if it was a straightforward choice between being hit at 30mph, and being hit at 20mph, you'd plump for 20mph every time. But if you get hit on a road with a 20mph limit, where's the guarantee that it will be at 20mph? Reducing casualties depends on drivers reducing their speed and that appears to be happening – ironically – quite slowly. *Hayley Birch writes on science and the environment from Bristol, UK*

Directors wanted – MAG Media Limited

The company that publishes *The Road* magazine (MAG Media Limited – a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Motorcycle Action Group Limited) is looking to appoint two new Directors, to work with John Mitchell, former MAG National Chairman and Director; and Ian Mutch, MAG President – who is under contract to edit and produce the magazine on behalf of MAG Media Ltd.

The Road is an 84-page full-colour magazine that is published every other month (its schedule ties in with MAG National Committee meetings). The magazine is the best recruiting tool MAG has; however, for a long time it has cost MAG a considerable amount of money to keep it going.

The remit of MAG Media's Directors, is to get the best deal for MAG's members –to review the costs of producing the magazine, including looking into the cost of advertising to bring in revenue. Ever since *The Road* was first created to replace Streetbiker as MAG's main publication (by Ian and John, back in 2004), the intention has always been to make it pay for itself in the long run. There are plans to re-introduce *The Road* into newsagents (a successful trial was undertaken in 2005) where it will be sold, with a percentage going to the newsagent.

Contact between Directors will usually be by electronic means or phone – there will be no requirement to attend TMAGL Board meetings; and the amount of work required should not be too onerous. This role – like all other Directorships in the MAG group of companies – is a purely voluntary role. Interested parties should of course have an awareness of the duties of a Director under English and Welsh company law.

Any MAG member with suitable experience in the creative industry, publishing or the print trade should get in touch with John Mitchell on 07855 111946 or via email at jmitchell@mag-uk.org

Leon explains: this document can be refined to make it as relevant as possible for a particular region or council – and I will gladly help regional reps and activist reshape it as and when they use it:-

Pathways for Progress: Reducing congestion, improving mobility and cutting casualties

Improving policy for Motorcycling and PTW riders

Powered Two Wheelers (PTWs) aka motorbikes and scooters offer more sustainable options to meet transport needs than cars or vans – and reduce congestion related problems. But, this mode and the interests and safety of riders is often overlooked or undervalued in the UK.

In response, the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) identifies five pathways for progress.

Urgent review of road furniture and 'safety' schemes to identify and eliminate elements that have potential for adverse impacts on PTW rider safety

The dynamics of road use by PTW, i.e. optimally safe positions to be on the carriageway, and especially on bends, are critically different to cars, bicycles and pedestrians. However, these differences are less well recognised or understood than they could and should be.

Many 'safety' schemes involve new hard engineered obstructions including build-outs or the widening of existing ones such as traffic islands, but these can act as trip hazards, especially when markings or illuminations deteriorate or fail – as regular they do.

Currently, there is significant room for improvement in this area for consideration by highway engineers and designers. And, as the DfT and TfL have acknowledged to MAG, this problem results in schemes that inadvertently raise risks of injurious conflict for PTW riders that have resulted in serious injuries or fatalities.

MAG's response is to request an urgent review of existing and proposed schemes and will pro-actively assist in that review process – and help propose refinements to reduce the impact of this problem. The DfT and TfL have also acknowledged that there are gaps in Road Safety Audit processes. TfL has initiated its own review as a Local Transport Authority (LTA) as a DfT review processes will take years to complete. MAG suggests that the LTAs in all UK regions should initiate their own review as a matter of urgency.

Lifting bans on PTWs in all with-flow bus lanes

An overwhelming bank of evidence (see attached notes) shows that PTW use of bus lanes has environmental benefits and improves the safety of riders of motorcycles *and* cyclists. And, no evidence has ever been produced to show any adverse impacts on bus services.

The benefits of PTW use of bus lanes are recognised in over 40 UK towns and cities including three of key importance:

PTWs have had highly scrutinised access to London's entire Network of Strategic Roads for the last six years. This followed more limited trials from 2004 onwards. And, after the most comprehensive and rigorous investigation of this measure in the world, PTW access to the entire strategic network across Greater London was made permanent in 2011.

In 2014, PTW access to bus lanes was also made permanent by Brighton and Hove council, which was the only Green led Council in the UK at the time.

PTWs have permanent access to all of the UK's busiest with-flow bus lanes throughout the City of Westminster which covers an extensive area of Central London. This follows successful trials run by the City Council on their roads since 2005, and by TfL on the strategic roads under their control. The area covered includes Buckingham Palace and Covent garden in the south, the Houses of Parliament and Trafalgar square – and up to Abbey Road and London Zoo in the north of the City.

Arguments against motorcycle access to bus lanes do not stand up to scrutiny that is duly objective, appropriately well informed and evidence based. It is also increasingly clear that arguments against the concept never will be sustainable, as evidence to the contrary continues to mount up. Any proposal to 're-invent the wheel' of investigating this measure should be confined to the introduction of trial schemes under experimental orders – rather than spending time and resources on attempts to try to reject this tried and tested advance in road safety for vulnerable road users and network efficiency for all.

Provision of parking facilities for PTWs should be on a par with bicycles

Demand for parking PTWs should be treated in a similar way to demand for parking bicycles as use of both modes helps to cut congestion related problems. PTWs are not cars and should not be seen as such, or as a source of parking charge revenues, just because they have number plates and bicycles don't.

The provision of Motorcycle Parking space on public highways should be as extensive and free of additional charges as it is for bicycles. And, where ever possible, some anti-theft provisions should be provided like ground anchors or bars for riders to chain their bikes to.

MAG recognises that decisions about PTW parking in off-street car parks may be beyond local authority control, but all Car Park owners should be encouraged to exempt PTWs from charges when they do not significantly reduce space for cars.

Most UK LTAs allow PTW's to park free of charge in Council operated motorcycle parking bays and in many on-street car parking spaces. Some operators of off road car parks do not charge for bike parking and MAG suggests there are good reasons for this progressive approach to be encouraged and become a unified policy in all regions.

Ensure that PTW rider safety is considered as much as other vulnerable road users in all road scheme consultations - and from the outset of all scheme developments

A significant number of proposals for road schemes across the UK are initiated and developed with no input from representatives of PTW riders. This frequently leads to that area of due concerns being overlooked or undervalued. To resolve this problem, MAG as a representative of PTW riders should be added to all lists of consultees for all road scheme proposals – and invited to make input from the start of scheme development processes.

The introduction of a Motorcycling Officer in all LTAs

Currently, every LTA in the UK has a Walking and Cycling officer but very few have an officer with specific responsibility for PTW riders – and even though they form one third of the main groups of Vulnerable Road Users.

Moves to rectify that omission have begun in some LTAs, the most recent being Kirklees council in Yorkshire and that followed a productive and ongoing engagement with MAG. Both parties have direct contact with each other and speaking frankly and honestly about problems has already proved to be a highly efficient way to address problems and deliver progress for all concerned with road safety and casualty reduction.

Report from Leon and Lembit

It's been typically busy since the General Election, with Leon focussing on threats to our highway space while Lembit has been consolidating the situation with MPs and attending MAG events.

1. We were well established with MPs before the General Election. Those who are still in office appear to have started recommending support for MAG to others. The Chair and Vice-Chair visited Parliament and saw for themselves the extent to which we're welcomed there. If you want to come and meet your MP in Parliament, let Lembit know.
2. We're planning a methodical approach to recruiting MPs. L&L invite RRs to visit your local MPs and invite them to join. We have a great story to tell - and by taking a picture you also create a news story for them, which they'll like very much indeed. We hope we can get MPs to join in this way because those local relationships are of practical significance to our ability to stand up for riders' rights at a local basis. Contact us anytime if you want to talk through your plans on this.
3. L&L attended a meeting with new Transport Minister Andrew Jones MP. Reps from MCIA and BMF were also there. It's our view that this was actually helpful. Quite clearly we have more momentum than the BMF at present, and there's no threat to us from working with them when we have common cause. It was also important for the Minister to see a united sector.

4. The booking system for Lembit's time has been much improved. If you want Lembit to attend something in your area, just call HQ. It's not guaranteed that he'll be able to do every event, but there's a strong logic to how his time is being portioned to the various things which need to be achieved.

5. Leon has been extremely busy with bus lane campaigns and armadillo proposals nationwide. These continue to remain a big issue for riders and the level of the issue is directly reflected in Leon's current workload. He has made some inroads by working with RRs, and directly with TfL in London. This is a big problem and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

6. Steve Wykes has scored a major victory in Scotland. MAG held a meeting with officials responsible for the 'old' Forth Road Bridge near Edinburgh. Thanks to this, it looks very likely that the Scottish Government will permit learner riders to use the bridge, therefore saving them a 70 mile return detour. Alex Salmond was extremely helpful on this one, and he almost certainly played a major part after we made representations to him about the matter. The whole campaign has significantly improved our relationship with the Scottish National Party - and that's going to be helpful in terms of our influence North of the border.

7. Lembit has attended a number of MAG events around the country, and will continue to do so in the weeks ahead. These provide a valuable barometer of what riders care about. The impression is of a hugely positive movement, with growing membership and a shared sense of purpose. Lembit feels there is real potential to up the extent to which we use these rallies to sign up new members. Any ideas on this are very much welcomed.

8. Thanks to the 'MAG Camera,' we're able to sustain an increased number of pictures in The Road. Lembit usually has it with him, and if you've got an event, PLEASE take a picture, as it says as much as 1,000 words.

9. We've attached some pictures of recent events, which you may find interesting. They were taken at Lion Rally, Farmyard, Fosse Park Riders in Leicester.

10. Remember, we're always here for you. Let us know how we can help anytime you need to know something or would like to ask us to help to sort something out.

Leon & Lembit

ARMADILLOS CONTINUE THEIR INVASION AND HEAD NORTH EAST TO DURHAM.

Despite the obvious dangers these pose to two wheeled vehicles, powered or not, and pedestrians my personal opinion is that, sadly, this is a corporate manslaughter charge just waiting to happen. I sincerely hope not, however, once again, Councils continue with this madness failing miserably to listen to the concerns and warnings of those who obviously know better and might be on the wrong end of something nasty happening.

See MAG FB page or Durham MAG FB page for details.



https://www.change.org/p/armadillo-lane-segregators-remove-these-deathtraps?recruiter=222793996&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=facebook&utm_campaign=share_page&utm_term=des-lg-share_petition-no_msg

The following is extremely important: ACTION REQUIRED PLEASE

Hi all,

Re the Newcastle Armadillos in Gosforth.

You don't have to come from the North to object, if folks could get members to write a short objection stating their worries and concerns and then send it to the 3 email addresses below. Paper snail mail letters are going out tomorrow slightly amended with the 'insurance' question added that was brought up at the NC meeting.

OK Folks. The ball is rolling on Armadillos. If you want to register your objection, because messages on Facebook are pointless here's what you need to do.

Write a short email outlining your worries to the following email addresses:

Pat Ritchie Chief Exec; pat.ritchie@newcastle.gov.uk
<<mailto:pat.ritchie@newcastle.gov.uk>>

Nick Forbes leader of the Council, personal assistant ;
anne.smeaton@newcastle.gov.uk <<mailto:anne.smeaton@newcastle.gov.uk>>

Ged Bell Councillor with responsibility for cycle lanes; personal
assistant lynn.bryden@newcastle.gov.uk <<mailto:lynn.bryden@newcastle.gov.uk>>

Dave Wigham, Regional Rep., MAG North East.

[The 'Insurance' question to which Dave is referring is: i) If you live in the area to which you are communicating you have the right to ask your Council who their Insurers are ii) to ask if their Insurers are aware of exactly what they are insuring and the possible implications that have been raised. Ed]

And, here for your information, is the letter the North East Region's Political Officer, Andy Whitworth, sent on behalf of North East Region

11th June 2015

Chief Executive Pat Ritchie
Newcastle City Council Leader of Council.
Newcastle City Council
Civic Centre
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8QH

Re: Gosforth, Great North Road cycle lane works, Regents Centre.

Dear Ms Ritchie,

Firstly to introduce myself, I am the North East Political Officer for The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG). I am writing to express grave concern about your intention to introduce the use of 'armadillos' on the public highway. There are a number of reasons that this should be reconsidered.

It is vital for any elected member or officer in a local authority to know and pay due attention to the fact that Armadillos and similar devices have not been approved by the DfT for use on UK roads.

This means that responsibility for any injury or death arising from installation of such devices will rest solely with the authority concerned and the individuals in the authority who can be deemed to be responsible for a decision to install them.

And, although armadillos are often described as lane 'delineators', the DfT does not currently categorise them as road signs – which is extremely helpful to the manufacturers and promoters of them as all 'signs' for use on UK roads have to be approved by the DfT.

These dividers are effectively a 'Trip Hazard' that have potential in various scenarios to cause serious or fatal injuries to pedestrians and riders of bicycles and Powered Two Wheelers (PTWs) aka motorcycles, scooters and mopeds. Simply put, an obstacle has been placed on the flat highway surface.

To assist your understanding of why this is so, just imagine anyone in any council suggesting that such things should be bolted to a pavement to 'improve' the flow or safety of pedestrians.

PTW users have had the road available to them for emergency actions and emergency escapes considerably reduced and their escape route now has obstacles placed in it which will cause the rider to be thrown from their vehicle and back into the path of larger heavier vehicles.

The interests and safety of PTW riders have clearly not been given as much attention and consideration as is necessary during the scheme design stages and in the consultations you are required to conduct prior to introduction of such measures. Please could you forward by return mail the Risk Assessment for all road users that was carried out prior to these armadillos being included in the scheme. Especially the section that covers PTWs.

Given the increased risk to PTWs we would like to know the name and contact details of your insurer as the underwriters need to be made aware of the increased risk to PTWs and the implications for your underwriters. We will be informing the underwriters of our concerns as a hazard to PTWs has been introduced to this road.

In the light of which we suggest that a meeting with representatives of The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) is scheduled as a matter of extreme urgency.

There has only been one official independent trial of these devices which was commissioned by Transport for London (TfL) and conducted by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL). Are you aware of their findings?

MAG's Policy and Campaigns Adviser, Dr Leon Mannings has just discovered that serious questions are being raised about the use of 'armadillos' that have not yet entered the public domain. And, it is also becoming clear that the TRL trial included one critical flaw that has been unrecognised until now and a critical aspect of results was omitted from the TRL report:

1. The TRL trial did not get anywhere near replicating multi modal use as in real traffic conditions.
2. A significant number of two wheeler riders (on pedal and motor powered vehicles) who participated in the TRL trial have recently confirmed that there are serious reasons to review the wisdom of any authority using such devices.

We seek 3 action points.

1. A meeting with yourselves
2. The risk assessment for PTWs and this scheme
3. The address of your insurers

I look forward to a meeting with yourselves where we can discuss our serious concerns,

Yours sincerely

Andy Whitworth. North East Political Officer. Motorcycle Action Group.
C/O60 Front Street
Pity Me
Durham
DH1 5DE

Mob. 07806 288204
Tel. 0191 3832047

cc. to the Leader of the Council and all Councillors as well as the Leader of the Opposition.

New young biker campaign launched. (Tuesday 16th June 2015)

The Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership has launched a campaign aimed at reducing the number of young bikers injured on the county's roads.

See more at:

<http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/4411.html#sthash.pJ8yorfn.dpuf>

A piece on the dreaded Biofuels:

EU Policy departments' monthly highlights - The impact of biofuels on transport and environment

The use of biofuels in transport is being promoted as a means of tackling climate change, diversifying energy sources and securing energy supply. It also provides new options for using agricultural crops.

However, it also gives rise to environmental, social and economic concerns.

This study provides a detailed overview of biofuels production and consumption and of related policies worldwide. It also contains comprehensive analysis of key aspects affecting the overall sustainability of biofuels

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/513991/IPOL_STU%282015%29513991_EN.pdf

Fatalities on Scotland's roads increase by 16%

(17th June 2015)

While the total number of [casualties on Scotland's roads](#) in 2014 fell by 2% to the lowest number since records began, the number of fatalities rose by 16%, from 172 to 200, and the number of people seriously injured also increased by 1% to 1,694.

Derek Mackay, Scotland's transport minister, described the increase in fatalities and serious injuries as "disappointing".

The figures also show that in 2014 there were 1,040 child casualties in reported road accidents, a year on year decrease of 2%. This included seven fatalities, two fewer than 2013, and 171 children who were seriously injured, up from 143 in 2013.

There were five fewer pedal cyclists killed than in 2013 but 18 more pedestrian fatalities. There were also eight more motorcyclists killed and four more car user fatalities.

2014 saw a 5% reduction in car users seriously injured and a small decrease in bus and coach users seriously injured but other modes of transport saw increases in the number of people seriously injured. There were 5% more pedestrians and pedal cyclists seriously injured and a 14% increase in the number of motorcyclists seriously injured.

The statistics provide updates on progress against Scotland's road safety targets as set out in the Scottish Road Safety Framework.

Derek Mackay said: "The increase in fatalities and the number of people seriously injured in road accidents in 2014 is disappointing. It demonstrates the need for every one of us to take responsibility when using the road network.

"The longer term downward trends and the annual decline in the total number of casualties, to the lowest level since records began, are encouraging but more can, and must, be done.

"At the Road Safety Framework Strategic Partnership Board Meeting earlier this month I launched a review of our progress in delivering the Road Safety Framework to 2020.

"Transport Scotland is working together with road safety partners to assess the progress that has been made to date, with the aim of redoubling our efforts and focus through to 2020 and beyond."

- See more at: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/4416.html#sthash.ouauFdhH.dpuf>
 - <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/news/increased-number-people-killed-scotland%E2%80%99s-roads>
-

Motorcyclists in Doncaster are being given free rein to use bus lanes on one of Doncaster's busiest routes in a bid to avoid congestion.

A stretch of York Road has been opened up to bikers in the hope of reducing traffic jams on the A638. The road, the main route into the town centre from the north, is frequently clogged with rush hour traffic with tailbacks early in the morning and then again at night as motorists make their way home.

Now Doncaster Council chiefs are hopeful that by allowing motorbikes to use the lanes the scheme will help reduce congestion and also improve safety for bikers.

Motorbike symbols on the stretch of the A638 will be unveiled to signify the adoption of the new rules.

An experimental trial period is being used so that the safety and practical impacts of the changes can be monitored during the coming months.

Other Local Authorities in England have adopted similar schemes, with positive impacts in increasing safety for motorcyclists and reducing congestion.

The impact of the changes on motorbike riders, pedestrians, pedal cyclists and buses will be carefully monitored while the trial is ongoing.

Members of the public will be able to give feedback during the trial, including sharing their experience of using the road, raising objections or making general comments.

MCIA reports UK motorcycle sales are up by 11.3% so far this year.

Recent figures released by the Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA) show more than 11.3% more new motorcycles have been registered in 2015 compared to the same period last year.

2015 kicked off as a strong year for motorbikes with growth in sales and registration figures in January and February – now it doesn't look like it's going to slow down any time soon.

"Adventure sport" bikes have seen growth by **22.1%** – this is unsurprising with releases like Triumph's Tiger 800 XRx, Ducati's Multistrada 1200 and Yamaha's MT-09 Tracer.

"Naked" bikes also up by **32.2%**.

An MCIA spokesperson said: "Good news again regarding new motorcycle registrations. Year-to-date figures are up by 11.3% and there was a 10.7% increase when comparing this May with May 2014."

Bristol - Road safety operation sees 100 motorists and cyclists stopped. (11 June 2015) - [part article]

More than one hundred motorists and cyclists were spoken to yesterday morning (June 10) as part of a road safety operation on Gloucester Road and Zetland Road.

Police officers from the city centre and Southmead neighbourhood teams worked with the council's Parking Services to remind road users about the rules they need to follow in order to keep everyone safe.

In total, 51 motorists were stopped and spoken to, most (46) in relation to stopping in cycle boxes. Forty-nine cyclists were warned about offences including not stopping at red lights, riding on the pavements, and not stopping within cycle boxes.

For the full report:- <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/newsroom/road-safety-operation-sees-100-motorists-and-cyclists-stopped>

Motorcyclists to use their experience wisely on summer rides

GEM Motoring Assist is urging all motorcyclists to make safety their priority on every ride this summer.

GEM chief executive David Williams MBE said: "The vast majority of motorcyclists are highly skilled and experienced road users who have undergone extensive training to enjoy the privilege of riding a powerful machine on the public road.

"But having this experience is not the same as using it. That's why we're calling on motorcyclists to put safety first and reduce their risk when they're out enjoying a ride this summer.

"Motorcyclists are used to anticipating the actions of other road users – it's a key part of their training and vital for their safety. So we want to make sure they use their skills, commit to a defensive style of riding on every journey and remember that there are sure to be loved ones waiting for them to come home safe at the end of the day."

In an attempt to boost safety and mutual respect, GEM has compiled a selection of simple safety tips for motorcyclists and other road users:

For riders:

- A positive, defensive attitude is at the heart of safe riding. Make sure you're fit and alert before setting off.
- Choose your speeds wisely. Never exceed the speed limit, but also consider the weather and the traffic levels as well as your own mood and boundaries.
- Fight complacency on every ride. Maintain your mental and physical skills, practise slow manoeuvres and refresh your Highway Code knowledge.
- Taking time to share your experiences with other riders is a great way of learning.
- Be pleasant and forgiving to other road users. After all, we all make mistakes.

For other road users:

- Use your mirrors frequently, so you don't get taken by surprise if a fast bike is suddenly right behind you or even overtaking you.

- If you're following a motorcycle, it's a good idea to implement the '4-second rule'. In other words, keep four seconds behind the motorcyclist so you have plenty of time and space to react if anything happens ahead.
- Signal early to give a motorcyclist time to react and re-position.
- Give a rider extra space in adverse weather.
- Be pleasant and forgiving to motorcyclists. After all, we all make mistakes.

In 2013, 331 motorcyclists lost their lives on the UK's roads, and a further 4,866 sustained life-changing injuries. Studies show that motorcyclists are 38 times more likely to be killed in a road collision than a car occupant.

<http://www.motoringassist.com/motoring-advice/news/motorcyclists-to-use-their-experience-wisely-on-summer-rides/>

DfT takes global lead on driverless vehicles

The DfT has developed the world's first code of practice which paves the way for driverless cars to be tested in towns and cities around the UK, including Greenwich in south-east London, Bristol, Coventry and Milton Keynes, [according to the Telegraph](#).

The code of practice has been developed by the DfT in consultation with the government-backed UK Autodrive Consortium, which includes Ford, Jaguar, Tata and Innovate UK. The first autonomous vehicles are likely to be tested on the roads in late 2017.

The Telegraph says the code also covers driverless public transport networks, including autonomous 'pods' which can travel on pavements, and driverless buses.

Tim Armitage, project leader for the Autodrive Consortium, told the Telegraph: "We're coordinating the trials technically and working with government to ensure that the legislation keeps pace with what the technologies need to do in order to facilitate this brave new world.

"One of the things we will be doing is undertaking some acceptance surveys globally and in the UK to gauge public opinion around driverless technologies, and we'll monitor how that changes over the three years of our project."

The new code of practice states that a minimum of 30 seconds of data must always be available so the cause of any accident can be determined.

The 'M1' driverless vehicles must also have a manual driver in the vehicle who can take over if the autonomous system fails.

And if there is an accident, in the case of the M1 vehicle the liability lies with the driver, whereas in the case of the driverless pods it lies with the remote controller of the vehicle.

- See more at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/11668491/British-cities-to-become-testbeds-for-driverless-cars.html>

From FEMA President Anna Zee May 12, 2015. Vnuk judgment

I think the following statement made by Robert Goodwill in Parliament in March sums up the story:

“The Vnuk judgement concerned a case before the European Court of Justice about a man (Mr Vnuk) who was injured when he was knocked off a ladder by a trailer that was attached to a tractor in a barn in Slovenia. The effect of the judgment is that any vehicle that falls within the Motor Insurance Directives’ definition of a vehicle should have a compulsory motor insurance policy. The definition of vehicle in the Directives is very wide.

We are working closely with insurers, and others to identify how the ruling in the Vnuk case should be applied to a range of vehicles, including mobility scooters, golf buggies and ride-on lawn mowers. We will shortly be meeting with relevant stakeholders to discuss the particular issues that apply to those using mobility scooters.”

If you really want to read the whole judgment you can find it here:

<http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?jsessionid=9ea7d0f130debee8d31442a54efcb5f1e76bc90eeccb.e34KaxiLc3eQc40LaxqMbN4ObxmMe0?text=&docid=157341&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=101507>

In summary the Vnuk judgment implies that compulsory motor vehicle insurance extends to any use consistent with the normal function of a vehicle anywhere. This is the opinion of a law firm which specialises in motoring law and of the UK's Department for Transport (DfT). The Motor Insurance Directive (MID) also states that 'vehicle means any motor vehicle intended for travel on land and propelled by mechanical power but not running on rails'. This bit is the reason for the references to lawn mowers and mobility scooters above.

In the UK the MID is implemented by the Road Traffic Act (RTA); until now this has been accepted as applying to vehicles used on public roads but not to e.g. electric bicycles, lawn mowers and cars or motorcycles used solely for racing. The interpretation of the judgment, as discussed in a meeting I attended this week, was that racing machines would also require insurance cover and that anyone at a race event, marshals, pit crew, even participants in a race, would be entitled to sue if injured by a race vehicle. This particular meeting was focused on the implications for motor sport with several of the main organisers in the UK in attendance.

Now, I don't have a responsibility for representing motorcycle sport and I don't intend here to go into all the discussion that occurred in this meeting, but if anyone who reads this has any idea how race meetings are insured in EU countries other than the UK I would be happy to have the information. I've heard France has some system peculiarly its own which sounded particularly interesting.

Outside of sport there are also consequences for ordinary road users. If you are fortunate enough to be able to ride your trail bike on your own land you will need to be insured, in case you run into your gardener. If you have bikes which are SORNed (stands for Statutory Off Road Notification in the UK, where you only pay road tax if you use a vehicle on public roads) then strictly speaking they need to be insured, in case you ride your SORNed classic 3 yards down the front garden path and hit the

postman. I think, from the conversations I've had so far, it is not terribly likely that considerations of this kind should make a huge difference to your RTA insurance in the UK. However, taken as a whole, the consequences for motor insurance in general are not necessarily trivial. I don't know about you but I was not fully aware of exactly how some aspects of motor insurance work, so I will expand on that a little. Please bear with me if you know all this already.

One of the options in implementation of the MID is to derogate certain types of vehicle but it is expressly forbidden to derogate by types of use or types of place. So we could, by derogation, exclude electric bicycles from requiring compulsory insurance but we can't derogate a race machine or your garden path.

Each EU state has to have a body which acts as the insurer of last resort which pays the claims in cases where no identifiable insurance policy can be used, for example in a hit and run where a driver cannot be traced. In the UK this is the Motor Insurer's Bureau (MIB) and it is funded by the providers of compulsory motor insurance to the tune of about £30 per policy. MIB is also the body which would have pay up for claims against derogated vehicles so if we derogate Segways and you break your leg by getting hit by one it's the MIB which would pay the claim.

In the UK at any rate compensation under Public Liability is normally limited, a generous limit is £10 million, but there is no limit on a claim against motor insurance. This of course makes claiming against motor insurance a more attractive proposition if you have a claim to make.

So, what next? I think there are two areas the BMF needs to look at, legislation and insurance products. Proposals will be made to amend the regulations applying to compulsory motor insurance; we may be able to participate in the drafting of these proposals. These will then be subject to a consultation over the summer which we will naturally respond to. With respect to insurance this should be an opportunity to work with insurance providers to design products which will provide necessary cover without unnecessary cost. I'm not sure yet where we stand with respect to bikes which are SORNed, show bikes, farmers' trail bikes, the unregistered bike at the back of your garage etc. Note that something that will probably finally be decided by test litigation is the definition of the normal function of a vehicle. I would welcome any input from you about activity involving a bike which does not currently fall under the remit of the Road Traffic Act – this would help us in discussions with the insurance providers.

[£60 fine and 3 points is not enough, Ed.]

New study suggests one in three drivers use mobile

Tuesday 2nd June 2015

Kent County Council's road safety team has launched an awareness campaign [on the back of a study](#) which suggests that a third of drivers in the county use their mobile phones while driving - despite knowing it is dangerous and illegal.

The road safety team interviewed 303 drivers, with 33% of those aged under 35 years (21% of all drivers) admitting to using their phone while driving to text or use apps; and 37% of under 35s (27% of all drivers) saying they had taken a hand-held call while driving. Both statistics are higher for those aged 17-24 years.

Other findings included: 59% of respondents admitted that mobile phones were a distraction to drivers; while only 4% said it was acceptable to take a hand-held call while driving, 27% admitted to doing so; 33% of respondents aged 17-34 years admitted to using their phone to text or use apps whilst driving - but only 3% said this is an acceptable act.

[The campaign](#) utilises a mix of TV and radio advertising, Facebook and YouTube, bus backs and petrol nozzles, and roadside variable message signs (VMS) to draw comparison with times that most people wouldn't dream of using a mobile phone, and asks 'So why do it while driving?'

The road safety team's awareness campaign will coincide with countywide enforcement activity by Kent Police throughout June.

Steve Horton, Kent's road safety team leader, said, "Drivers using mobile phones make the roads less safe for us all.

"It's a fallacy to believe we can concentrate on two things at once. The reality is one activity will dominate the other. It's not simply splitting your attention 50:50, it's more like 95:5 with the task seeming the most important taking over. With drivers using a phone that means the call / text / situation update completely takes over from the driving.

"There are plenty of situations when using a mobile phone would be unacceptable or plain dangerous - would you seriously want to hold a conversation on the phone whilst using dangerous machinery?"

"We've found that a large number of drivers say they know using a mobile at the wheel is dangerous and unacceptable, yet many continue to do so. This campaign brings together the education message with an increased likelihood of being caught - key motivators to changing this behaviour."

The campaign is supported by Kent Fire and Rescue Service, who will use a range of events and activities, including Facebook and other social media content, to help spread the message.

- Kent Road Safety Survey: <http://www.kentroadsafety.info/mobilesurvey2015>
 - KCC Campaign: <http://www.kentroadsafety.info/mobiles/>
-

Interesting report courtesy of MCN: Bikers are regularly tarred with the reckless brush, and accused of being somewhere quite low on the evolutionary ladder of road users, but recent research by [Carole Nash](#) suggests that – in theory at least – us bikers have a big advantage over car drivers.

To mark the 80th anniversary of the first driving test, the specialist insurance brokers pitched motorcyclists head-to-head against car drivers to retake their theory test, and the results found that when it comes to road knowledge, two wheels are definitely better than four.

Based on the official DVSA test, it has revealed that motorcyclists fared better than their four-wheeled counterparts in 76% of instances – and more shockingly, that nearly one in five (16%) motorists would potentially fail their test were they to retake it.

The research has highlighted road sign recognition as a major concern. Given eight to identify, car drivers finished behind riders in six categories and whilst 83% of bikers were able to correctly identify all eight test signs, compared to 67% of car drivers.

When it came to other areas of road safety, motorcyclists beat car users eight times out of ten. For instance, 92% of riders knew the correct answer to the question "When may you cross a double solid white line in the middle of the road?" (to pass a road maintenance vehicle travelling at 10 mph or less) as opposed to 71% of car drivers.

Rebecca Donohue, Head of Marketing for [Carole Nash](#), said: “Motorcyclists scored so highly because they must have their wits about them at all times. It’s an exhilarating way to travel, but it can also prove risky unless you are fully aware of everything around you and the rules of the road.”

"Many motorcyclists are also car drivers and what this survey shows is that experiencing the road using different modes of transport makes you a safer road user," added the Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA)'s Safety and Training Director, Karen Cole. “This endorses the idea that motorcycling should be encouraged as a long-term strategy to improve road safety.”

Take the test yourself on the [Carole Nash website](#).

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