



Network

September 2014

A networking tool for Activists and other interested parties

Editorial	2
Those dreaded Armadillos	3-4
Robo Cars and MAG	4-5
FEMA common position on Personal Protective Equipment	5-8
'e'Petitions: Ban surface dressing roads. A11 central reservation barrier. Scrap the requirement for CBT every 2 years. Justice for Matthew Thompson.	8-9
Around GB & Ireland: Scotland – Bikes go green in Edinburgh. ROSPA guide Council Scotland road casualties. Ireland – meeting the neighbours. London – Buses trial motorcycle safety technology.	9-12
'Didn't see' THINK campaign. DVLA have a blog. Keep calm and drive.	12-13
European Parliamentary Question. <i>Misuse of equipment to detect breaches of the Highway Code.</i>	13-14
Big Council Cutbacks. Public urged to speak out to stop the UK's million drug drivers.	14-17
Charity urges Government to make driver eyesight tests compulsory.	17-18
Contacts	19

Acknowledgments: George (The Troll) Legg. Trevor Baird. Steve Wykes. Steve (Blayz) Blay & Jimmy, Salford MAG.
Tony Cox. Leon Manning. Lembit Opik. And anyone else I've forgotten.

Editorial

You won't believe what the road engineers in London are planning! Or maybe you will considering Councils and road engineers nationwide seem to have gone completely mad:

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/road-users-split-over-magic-roundabout-which-separates-bikes-from-cars-9680178.html>.

I've also heard that French riders and other road users have another fight on their hands. There has been a proposal from an « expert group » of France's national road safety council to reduce the speed limit on the road network from 90 to 80 km/h (50mph). It was met with strong opposition so watch this space. The French linguists amongst you can read more on this here:

http://www.motomag.com/Le-ministre-de-l-Interieur-favorable-a-une-experimentation-des-80-km-h.html#.U_4A5fl_ss4. The rest of us will just have to guess what it says!

We've just had DEMOs across the Country against the injustice of sentences handed down to drivers who kill riders. However, its not just riders whose lives seem to be considered 'cheap' by the justice system:-

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/driver-who-jumped-red-light-walks-free-after-crash-which-left-girl-brain-damaged-9690846.html>.

We had a good DEMO in Bristol, courtesy of a core group in Bristol MAG who put it together. The Council were very accommodating and the police helpful even giving us an escort for part of the route from Gordano services. El Presidente delivered his speech to tumultuous applause but we really should have got him a higher bench to stand on ☺.

My Trike still isn't finished which is why I'm spending a sunny Saturday morning finalising this edition! However, I will keep this editorial short as there is an amazing amount of material I'm sure you'd rather read.

Ride Free, AG

Please send copy for the October edition to: AnneGaleMAG@aol.com subject heading Network by
25th September.

Those dreaded Armadillos



Two Representatives from North West Region attended a meeting with Urban Vision (contracted by Salford Council) on the dreaded armadillos and this is the report from Steve Blay :

“ The Consensus of opinion from the meeting with Urban vision regarding the Irlam of the Height Roundabout, from what I witnessed, is that there is no support for this but it will go ahead anyway.

I informed Urban vision that MAG is totally against road narrowing, ‘for the specific purpose of traffic control to slow it down, to make it “safer” for Cyclist’ & the use of Killer Armadillos will be strongly contested.

I also informed them that if the scheme went ahead & a Biker was injured or worse because of it, MAG would use the full force of its solicitors to prosecute those responsible for designing & implementing this scheme.”

And this is **from Leon:**

In issue 53 of The Road you read about the trials in Salford of armadillo shaped lumps of plastic that have been bolted to the road in the attempt to make things safer for cyclists. Yet again something is being trialled without considering it's impact on motorcyclists (and looking at the way these things are breaking up and being scattered about the highway everyone else as well).

Please email Salford Council (politely!) and ask them to extend the consultation period so motorcyclists concerns can be addressed. See details below from Leon.

“ Following an early morning conflag between Lembit & Leon we decided that MAG should take a robust approach to plans for killer Armadillos etc in Salford - and to back up the excellent work so far by local members.

Amongst other things I now have an informal meeting set up in a couple of weeks time at senior DfT level to discuss critical issues for bikers arising from pro-cycling and other 'safety' schemes - with Bedford and Salford being prime examples.

Meanwhile, after an hour on the phone to Salford's cycling officer today, and a follow up email (which I've pasted below in case it's useful for your input to Salford) two things are clear:

1. All on NC and every biker you can contact should make an individual objection to Salford's, barmy proposals and Armadillo trial. PLEASE :)

Currently they have only had 40 responses!

Action: Please go here and take appropriate action:
<http://www.salford.gov.uk/schemeconsultations.htm>

Amongst anything else you may care to say, please also suggest that the consultation period - currently set to end 8th September - and be followed by internal 'consideration' and rubber stamping two weeks later, should be extended in order for them to properly discuss key issues with MAG.

2. Salford's cycling officer has been politely but firmly put on notice that Armadillos may not be as good an idea for his patch as previously thought.

Thanks in advance for action! Cheers, Leon.

This is what happens to these armadillos – not only are the broken pieces a hazard for all two wheelers but the bolts sticking up once the armadillo is smashed are equally so as the photo below proves:



Whoever thought this was a good idea must surely question if they are, indeed, in the right profession.

Robocars and MAG

This version 4th August 2014

The Government says it intends to bring legalisation to legalise 'driverless cars' next year. Lembit Öpik of MAG responds to this perilous proposal.

Technological progress must be balanced with common sense. In this regard, the proposed introduction of vehicles which are entirely automated currently seems like an inconceivably dangerous plan. Yet that's exactly what the Government says it intends to approve from 2015.

There are driverless transports in airports like Birmingham International, Gatwick and Heathrow. But these largely operate on rails, and the variables are massively reduced in such a controlled environment. Putting driverless vehicles on the road is totally different. Are we to believe software has been created which is capable of anticipating what unpredictable people will do? *Will they 'see' an overtaking motorbike?* Humans make mistakes, but software is prone to error too.

In the event of a crash, who's liable? The owner? The person inside the car? The maker? Insurance companies will fight this one out - and it's not one which lends itself to an easy answer; especially if there is a manual override. Would that make the human culpable if they DON'T prevent an accident? If the people are leaving it to the software, they will necessarily be less aware of events outside – and more likely to doze off, or to get on with other things. Again, the usefulness of a manual override is compromised enormously if the human isn't paying attention. It's worth noting that the capacity for overriding the system leads to awkward questions about the 'driveless' carconcept at a fundamental level.

It currently seems impossible to build a driverless bike –which would also run counter to the whole motivation to *ride* a bike anyway! Could driverless cars motivate people to switch to bikes in order to reclaim control of their travel experience? The Government wouldn't like that, but it's one of those unintended consequences they clearly haven't through. We could even end up with two 'classes' of traveller – the 'drivers' and the 'driven.' This could lead to social divisions which themselves could have an unpredictable impact on our freedoms – as disgruntled ministers try to enforce the 'safety' of driverless vehicles upon people who demand the 'freedom' to drive and ride.

Government thinking on transport is riddled with contradictions. Electric one-person 'Segways' are banned on Britain's roads, but legal in many other developed countries. Ministers back a ludicrously irrational High Speed Rail 2 proposal which ignores the business realities of the 21st century. Civil servants resist higher speed limits on motorways, even though today's vehicles are immeasurably more sophisticated than those of 50 years ago. And now we even have the approval of 'killer roundabouts,' despite the widespread belief that these increase risk – and congestion. Far from driverless cars, what we seem to have here is a 'driverless transport policy.'

Driverless Cars - call for responses

The UK Government announced its plans to review the legislative and regulatory framework for developing and testing driverless cars in the UK. The review will cover the best and safest ways to carry out trials where there is an individual in the vehicle who is qualified and capable of taking control of the car, and also look further ahead to the implications of potential use of fully autonomous vehicles.

The Department for Transport published the [Terms of Reference and a Discussion Document](#) on 4th August, and encourages response to the Discussion Document, noting the closing date of 19th September 2014.

Terms of Reference and discussion document: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/driverless-cars-regulatory-testing-framework>

FEMA common position on Personal Protective Equipment

FEMA (Federation Of European Motorcyclists Federation) which MAG helps fund and plays an active part as a founding member have released a common position on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

FEMA state, "The European Commission has recently launched a proposal for a Regulation on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). FEMA insists that the use of personal protective equipment should always be optional for the rider." highlighting FEMA's position, which MAG directly aligns with state, that there is, "no reason to make usage of PPE mandatory" and recommends that the use of personal protective equipment should always be optional for the rider. Guidelines on usage must be delegated to Member States.

However to be clear the FEMA common position on PPE does not state that there is a proposal for mandatory use of PPE from the European Commission.

The full article reads:

FEMA common position on Personal Protective Equipment

The European Commission has recently launched a proposal for a Regulation on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). FEMA insists that the use of personal protective equipment should always be optional for the rider.

Many motorcyclists regard personal protective equipment as essential in their riding activity. Although there is no legal requirement to use anything besides an approved helmet, studies show that almost all motorcyclists in the Nordic countries always use comprehensive personal protective equipment. The use of back and/or chest protection is also increasing.

Motorcycle riders are willing to take responsibility for their own safety and many prefer to increase their safety by using personal protective equipment of good quality, demonstrated by the number sending large sums on this every year.

Directive or Regulation?

The Commission has proposed a regulation which means that the Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts. FEMA represents consumers and our experience is that the users have very little influence in the drafting of delegated acts. Conversely, some states are liable to 'goldplate' a directive, thus over-reaching the objectives of the directive.

FEMA recommends that the revised proposal remains a directive which gives users better opportunity to influence the content.

Usage

Article 6 is the most important part for the European motorcyclists. It's about how each Member State may impose requirements on the use of personal protective equipment. Many motorcyclists use protective equipment, even though it is not a statutory requirement and even if going on a trip of only a few kilometres. There is therefore no reason to make usage of PPE mandatory. Europe is a continent with varied climates. To require the use of the same type of equipment in northern Finland and south of Sicily is neither appropriate nor feasible. The high usage of personal protection in the Nordic countries might simply indicate that the equipment is best suited for the Nordic climate.

FEMA recommends that the use of personal protective equipment should always be optional for the rider. Guidelines on usage must be delegated to Member States.

Costs

The cost of personal protective equipment is an important issue. A motorcycle leather suit can cost between €500 to €2000. Protective equipment ages and the users change shape which is why equipment needs to be replaced with some regularity. FEMA and dealers point out the importance of a well-fitting protective equipment at all times. When FEMA became aware of the current proposal contact was made with representatives for CEN in different countries. There it emerged that work is in progress in CEN where certain requirements currently only required for professional motorcycle riders will be placed on all personal protective equipment for motorcyclists. This requires more testing which will mean increased prices. In future discussions FEMA will emphasize the importance of avoiding large increases in price, both within the PPE directive and within CEN work; for example by making the necessary testing reasonable for different levels of requirements depending on the application and user.

FEMA recommends that this too is a reason that the revised proposal in the future becomes a directive. A regulation with mandatory requirements where users have no influence could mean sharply higher costs for consumers.

Comfort

It is very important that the PPE fits well and feels comfortable. If it is loose the protective elements will not remain where they should be (shoulders, elbows, hips and knees). A back protector must be neither too big nor too small. It is of great importance that there is personal protection equipment for both men and women, for people of different sizes and for different uses. Increased demands on postures and tests can lead to less choice in terms of size and fit.

FEMA recommends that different levels of requirements be recognised depending on the application and the user; testing must be appropriate for the level of the requirements. This will allow the manufacturer to provide a range for all motorcyclists.

Quality

The quality is certainly important when buying safety equipment at high cost. As a consumer, it is assumed that the equipment complies with the requirements to obtain a CE marking, but this is not always the case. FEMA would like to see much more market surveillance of motorcycle equipment to ensure CE marking is not misapplied. Today, most consumer tests in Europe are made by motorcycle magazines and these tests do not correspond to tests for certification.

Sports

Marc Marquez, Dani Pedrosa, Valentino Rossi, Jorge Lorenzo and Cal Crutchlow are today's top names in road racing. They have specially equipped clothing with embedded electronics, for example airbags that cost about € 40,000. It is obvious that people who practice a sport at World Championships / Olympic level should have the best equipment. However, these standards cannot be required for all who train and compete in motorsport. Insisting on unreasonably high standards of protective equipment for road racing and other motorcycle sports will make it impossible for youngsters and others to train and compete at a lower level. This might lead to more accidents on roads since youngsters would be unable to afford to race on tracks.

FEMA therefore recommends that future standards take into account the young people and others who want to train and compete in motorcycle sport.

Furthermore in the FEMA Mission & policy which MAG had a direct influence in writing the policy on Personal Protective Equipment states -

FEMA encourages the voluntary use of personal protective equipment and clothing appropriate to the environment in which they are employed.

We oppose any requirements for the mandatory use of such equipment and clothing.

FEMAs - The European Agenda for Motorcycle Safety (EAMS) The Motorcyclists' Point of View <http://www.fema-online.eu/uploads/documents/safety/EAMS2009.pdf> - sets out precisely the policy on PPE

The positive attributes of personal protective equipment must always be balanced against their negative effects which can be dangerously uncomfortable for riders. Much more can be done to improve helmet and protective equipment designs.

National Member States should lower VAT rate for personal protective equipment and helmets (motorcycle helmets qualify for zero-rating in the UK but not accessories eg visor sold separately) for motorcycle use.

View the article with links to the proposal and procedure file on the FEMA website - http://www.fema-online.eu/index.php?mact=News.cntnt01_detail,0&cntnt01articleid=406&cntnt01returnid=15

Petitions

There are a few “new” petitions posted up on the government petition website as regards issues for motorcyclists – scooterists – Powered Two Wheelers (PTWs) and those of a certain disposition for three wheels – side-cars and trikes.

One petition, which is so straight forward that all riders would agree with, one that we think is also straight forward to sign but has also spawned a social media campaign and one that has led to quite a bit of debate on its merits, after being posted up on the MAG Facebook page.

(Our apologies if you don't do Facebook but this seems to be the chosen media to get information out and allow people to react – here at Network we do use Facebook but Twitter is for all those young ones!)

Ban Surface Dressing roads

A cheap but dangerous form of road re surfacing is surface dressing, which is tar sprayed onto a poor surface and then left with loose chipping for months. Any that are not stuck down can cause a hazard to any road user. This is fastest and cheapest however due to the chipping it is definitely the most dangerous surface for any and all two wheeled vehicles. Riding on this surface is not only dangerous but does a lot more harm than good. This cheap and nasty surface isn't sustainable and has to be re-done often and has no benefit whatsoever. If your (sic) going to do a job you may as well do it properly!

This form of road surfacing needs to be banned from the UK roads. All drivers would much rather have a road closed for longer and be done properly, rather than having to drive through a minefield and causing their vehicle damage which can be costly. The state of our roads has been an ongoing issue in this country and needs to be addressed.

Details at - <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/67408>

A11 Thetford to Barton Mills - Central reservation barrier

We the under signed request that the central reservation barrier type being employed on the A11 between, Thetford and Barton Mills be replaced with a design that does not present such a high risk to Motorcyclist and Scooterists.

The steel wire barrier has more uprights plus no prevention for motorcyclists and Scooterists to slide underneath, or through during and (sic) incident causing more devastating injuries.

Details at - <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/67873>

The - A11 Riders Action Group – can be found at - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/354112658075882/>

Scrap the requirement to re-take a CBT every 2 years

I would like to see the requirement to re-take the Compulsory Bike (sic) Training every two years removed. It is pointless to have to retake training, when the learning process is continued by the Rider once he or she is given the initial pass certificate by the test centre.

Further training is unnecessary, as the learning process is part of riding the bike. Once the initial skills are learned, nothing more can be gained from further re-testing. This is just a licence for the testing centres to print money. At approximately £100 every 2 years, this is a cost that is hard to bear for some young Motorcyclists, and is putting people off riding a cheap environmentally friendly form of transport.

Details at - <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/68402>

This is the petition highlighted on the MAG Facebook page which has drawn various comments which can be viewed at

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=10154270908488125&id=179141508124

I wouldn't normally print the whole of the following article, however, as we have just had DEMOs on the injustice of sentencing for those whose behaviour on the roads kills riders, I am, so, the final e-petition follows. And, please, don't forget that to verify your name on any e-petition you must acknowledge the email sent to your email address:-

From Yvonne Thompson: "In February 2013 I, my two small children, our family and friends all experienced a pain we never imagined we would have to face. My husband Matthew Thompson was tragically taken away from us in a motorcycle accident.

Matthew was travelling along the A149 at Castle Rising. Visibility was good, he was not speeding, his light was on and he was in the correct position. This though was not enough to stop the driver pulling directly across his path, leaving him no chance to break and killing him!!!! She was driving a black Audi and only experienced minor scratches and bruises.

Since the accident we have had to endure a long, painful 18 months only for her to receive a pitiful 2 year driving ban and 120 hours community service.

We understand this was an accident. She did not wake up and think I am going to kill someone today HOWEVER this woman believed she was a VICTIM and went on to appeal her two year ban. It would seem not having a driving licence is an inconvenience to her.

This shows a complete lack of remorse and is absolutely disrespectful.

All the family and I asked was that she accepted her punishment and allowed us to attempt to find some peace.

After much deliberation, guidance from the judge and two painful adjournments in which to consider her actions and after being advised she could possibly incur an increase in her sentence, Mrs. Maureen Haller decided to abandon her self-funded appeal and accept her original punishment of a two year driving ban. She didn't do the decent thing but just accepted, after two long hours, that she would prefer this to the alternative of being given a harsher punishment.

This petition is to gain support, raise awareness and to bring about a change in the law so that others will not have to suffer as we have.

We as Matthew's family need your help." **JUSTICE FOR MATTHEW THOMPSON** (can be viewed via Facebook) <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/66960>

AROUND GB & IRELAND

Scotland

Bikes go green in Edinburgh

MAG warmly welcomes the decision by Edinburgh Council at their Transport Infrastructure and Environment Committee meeting on the 26th August 2014 to finally permit a trial of access for Motorcycles and Scooters in their with flow bus-lanes. The first Authority in Scotland to do so.

The Motorcycle Acton Group (MAG) is delighted to see that Edinburgh City Council is taking this great step forward after productive discussions that were spurred into new life by a wide-ranging review of its transport policies over a year ago.

MAG regional Rep, Steve Wykes says; " It's very heartening to see that the City's Transport Infrastructure and Environment Committee have endorsed a move that has proved to be a great success in safety and environmental terms in many other cities in the UK."

MAG's Transport Policy Adviser, Dr Leon Mannings, adds: "It has been good to see such a genuine commitment to evidence based policy development in Edinburgh. And, to see the extensive amount of evidence that we provided has been duly considered as it clearly shows that the safety of cyclists and motorcyclists is improved – as is the efficiency of road use and corresponding reductions in pollution and journey times."

The trial is scheduled to start in June 2015 and run for a period of nine months under the auspices of ETRO (Experimental Traffic Regulation Order). At which point a report will be prepared to determine the effect of permitting access for PTW's and a decision will be made as to whether the measure will be made permanent.

Here are links to the documents:.

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/3481/transport_and_environment_committee#minutesDateSearchWidget

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/1632/edinburgh_set_to_be_first_scottish_city_to_permit_motorbikes_in_bus_lanes

The campaign to allow bikes in bus-lanes has spanned many years with the earliest demonstrations coinciding with the introduction of Greenways (Bus lanes) into the city in 1997/98. Further demonstration taking place sporadically over the years, as the weight of evidence indicating that permitting bikes access to bus-lanes does not adversely affect other users already granted access, increased. Notable successes along the way included a run where members of the Transport committee including the deputy convenor of the time Ken Harold were treated to a riders perspective of some of the hazards we face as riders. While this increased awareness opposition from within the transport department and among some councillors and the police prevented a change in the status quo. The next significant step followed a joint MAG and BMF demo run to Holyrood in 2009 after which regular meetings with Councillor Stuart McIvor who was supportive of our aims increased the impetus, but still fell foul of opposition at committee stage.

Finally in April 2014 doubtless at least in part as a result of access to bus-lanes in London and the recognition of the environmental benefits by TfL, a review of access to Bus-lanes in Edinburgh was

initiated. Comprehensive submissions both from MAG and the BMF and an explanation of the rationale for granting access made to the Edinburgh Transport Forum helped minimise opposition and the recommendation was passed overwhelmingly, with minor dissent from the Greens and one Lib Dem Councillor.

All in all a victory for motorcyclists and common sense, in giving us a chance to prove that we can play a part in helping reduce congestion and emissions, without adversely affecting safety of other vulnerable road users and enhancing our safety. Though, we will need to ensure that riders do not take access for granted, consider the needs of other users, and do not abuse the privilege of being allowed to use bus-lanes.

Lastly I would like to thank Cllr. Lesley Hinds Chair of the Transport Infrastructure and Environment Committee for her support, Ken Glendinning and his colleagues in the BMF for their efforts, members of Edinburgh MAG and West Lothian MAG for their support over the years and invaluable contributions from Dr Leon Mannings and John Mitchell in providing our evidence based submissions.

Ride Free, Steve Wykes, Regional Rep, Motorcycle Action Group Scotland

and

RoSPA Guide Councillors Scotland Road Casualties

RoSPA has announced that they have produced a step-by-step guide to help local councillors in Scotland prevent road tragedies has been published by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).

The charity joined forces with Transport Scotland to publish - Road safety: A Guide for Local Councillors in Scotland - which RoSPA states, "Includes all the information an elected member will need to develop road safety within their ward."

The guide is divided into several sections including: "Road Casualties", which looks at high-risk groups and the main causes of accidents.

Those high risk groups include motorcyclists and MAG in Scotland is identified as members of the Operational Partnership Group as part of Scotland's Strategic Road Safety Partnership Board, which is viewed as, "central to the success of shared ownership and a broad ethos of 'working with others'."

Now that last part of the previous sentence is a bit heavy however MAG is explained in simpler terms as, "A volunteer led group of motorcycle enthusiasts who promote the interests and rights of all riders" at Network we couldn't have put that better ourselves.

Sandy Allan, RoSPA's road safety manager in Scotland, said: "The document will prove essential to both new and serving councillors who are looking for more information on how to save lives and reduce injuries on the roads in their wards. It gives a step-by-step guide to road safety policy and services in Scotland.

Some salient points from the report are:

Road safety priorities and programmes should be based on casualty data and road safety research

The interaction between human factors and road features has important implications for safety engineering, road user education and highlights the need for Engineers, Road Safety Officers, Roads Police and others to work closely together.

Almost all road crashes involve human error, ranging from simple mistakes to deliberately dangerous, illegal behaviour. They usually involve a number of contributory factors.

In Great Britain, the most common of these are basic errors, such as failing to look properly (a factor in 30% of road deaths), loss of control of a vehicle (31% of deaths), inappropriate speed (23% of deaths) and impairment or distraction (22% of deaths).

As MAG and as riders of motorcycles, scooters, trikes we all too aware that when these “basic errors” involve riders then the consequences can be tragic, no matter what the “fault” is. MAG in Scotland continues to work for the interests and rights of all riders within this sphere.

PDF copy of the guide visit www.rospa.com/roadsafety/info/road-safety-guide-for-councillors-scotland.pdf

Original Source - <http://www.rospa.com/news/releases/detail/?id=1330>

Ireland – Meeting the neighbours.

On Friday 15th August last, a delegation from MAG Ireland met with representatives from MAG Northern Ireland and MAG UK. The meeting took place at Kirkistown racing circuit during the Woolsey Coulter Advanced Rider Training day.

The discussions covered a wide range of topics including recent casualty trends and EU legislation as well as domestic issues and current developments within our respective organisations.

MAG Ireland would like to extend our sincere thanks to our colleagues from MAG Northern Ireland for facilitating what proved to be a very useful and productive meeting for everyone involved.

London buses trial motorcycle safety technology

Posted on Aug 10, 2014

Transport for London (TfL) are to fit four London buses with detection software that alerts drivers when motorcyclists (plus cyclists and pedestrians) are moving close to their vehicles.

TfL will run a six-week trial from 15th August on route 25 and route 73. The rival systems are CycleEye from Fusion Processing Limited and Cycle Safety Shield from Safety Shield Systems Limited.

CycleEye uses both radar and optical technology to detect cyclists in close proximity to vehicles with the system giving audio alerts to their presence to the bus driver. Cycle Safety Shield detects pedestrians, cyclists or motorcyclists in close proximity to vehicles, giving a visual warning and then an audio alert to the driver.

Findings will be published later this year.

The cost of the driving theory test will be cut by 25%, saving learner drivers in excess of £100 million over the next 9 years, Transport Minister Stephen Hammond announced on 23 June 2014.

The fee for car and motorcycle theory tests will fall by £6 in October 2014, taking the cost of a test from £31 to £25, with a further drop of £2 in October 2015.

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

Read the full [response to the consultation](#).

'Didn't See' campaign launched by THINK! (story from Newspress)

The ['Didn't See'](#) radio campaign has been launched by THINK! to encourage drivers to take longer to look for motorcyclists.

Robert Goodwill, Road Safety Minister, has announced the launch of a new THINK! radio campaign to encourage drivers to take longer to look for motorcyclists after figures revealed that 30 bikers are killed or injured every day at junctions.

The 'Didn't See' campaign will run for 4 weeks on national radio with the aim of reducing the number of motorcyclist and driver collisions on our roads.

Research for THINK! has shown that drivers believe the majority of motorcycle accidents happen because of bikers breaking the speed limit – but statistics actually show around half of motorcyclist accidents, where the rider is killed or seriously hurt, occur at junctions, with drivers failing to look properly being the most common cause.

DVLA Have A Blog

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency now have blog "Inside DVLA" which replaces their quarterly newsletter for stakeholders, commercial customers and suppliers – what you didn't even know they had a newsletter to read to keep up with what they are doing.

The DVLA state that, "New posts will be added regularly, moving away from a quarterly update. This means we can get new information to you simply and more quickly" and you can engage with DVLA with the facility to leave fair and constructive comments to their posts.

As DVLA's Head of Communications, Victoria Ford states, "We welcome your feedback and will reply to any comments as quickly as possible, so let us know what you think. We want to know what works for you and what doesn't so please get in touch."

Blog At DVLA - <https://insidedvla.blog.gov.uk/>

Keep Calm and Drive

Keep calm and drive say the AA (Auto Mobile Association) as through their survey of 23,085 AA Members they found that 65% argue in the car.

The AA state that, "The cars on Britain's roads are more likely to be filled with raised voices than happy chatter as thousands drive off to their summer holiday. The younger motorists, 18-24 year olds, are most likely to have in-car rows (73%) compared to 60% of over 65s. While drivers from Northern Ireland get hotter under the collar than drivers from the South West."

Directions apparently cause the greatest amount of arguments for all age groups - For the 35-44s it is the noisy children in the back that are the second placed cause for arguments –While more women than men say they argue about directions, it is the men that say their passengers are more likely to argue about how fast they are driving.

Top 10 causes of arguments in cars

1. Knowing the way to go
2. Driving too fast
3. Not asking for directions
4. Noisy children
5. Shouting at other drivers
6. Temperature in the car
7. Not agreeing on where to eat
8. Not agreeing on what to listen to
9. Topic of conversation
10. Driving too slowly

So as you're riding on your motorcycle who do you argue with as you concentrate on you riding – the little voices. We wonder do you argue with you pillion rider or just switch the helmet to helmet intercom off!

Article in full - <http://www.theaa.com/newsroom/news-2014/in-car-arguments.html>

European Parliamentary Question

Misuse of equipment to detect breaches of the Highway Code

In Italy, it is regrettably common practice to use speed cameras and similar equipment on stretches of road which are not particularly dangerous, in conjunction with speed limits that are particularly low in the light of the nature of the road and of the surrounding area.

In too many cases, this equipment would appear to have been installed more with the aim of filling the coffers of the local body responsible for monitoring the road concerned than to meet a genuine need to increase safety for the benefit of road-users.

Does not the Commission consider that it would be desirable to call upon the competent authorities to put an end to such practices, which cost members of the public money when they are already facing difficulties because of the crisis, while not yielding any benefit to the community in terms of increased safety?

Does this sound somewhat familiar?

Original Source - <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2014-006248&format=XML&language=EN>

Big Council Cut Backs

Breakdown and road safety organisation GEM Motoring Assist is calling on local authorities to tackle the present menace of road signs obscured by foliage.

Obscured road signs are at best a nuisance for drivers, and at worst can be misleading and dangerous, according to GEM.

GEM chief executive David Williams MBE comments: "Road signs provide vital orders and information for drivers, who choose their speeds and actions based on what the signs tell them. If they can't see the signs, then their ability to make safe decisions is compromised, especially if they're on unfamiliar roads.

"In the name of road safety, we therefore call on local authorities to organise some far-reaching cutbacks of trees, bushes and branches, so that speed limit and other signs are made as clear as possible to everyone using their roads."

GEM encourages drivers to report obscured road signs to the appropriate local authority, and to remember that a limit of 30mph usually applies to all traffic on all roads with street lighting, unless there are signs to say otherwise.

Networks comment is never mind speeding fines or a nuisance for drivers regarding blocked signs, for motorcyclists the lack of visibility at road junctions or even from private driveways caused by overgrown greenery can be at the worst deadly!

Different authorities have different maintenance schedules - Grass verges on rural roads may have only a single cut or may be cut twice a year certain junctions may be cut up to six times a year, sometime between August and October. Most authorities recognise that properly maintained verges are important for driver and pedestrian safety. The aim is to optimise road width and to maintain visibility, particularly at junctions and entrances to premises.

How does your local authority sack up on trees, hedges, shrubs, flowers and grass verges maintenance?

Original Article Source - <http://www.motoringassist.com/motoring-advice/news/gem-calls-big-council-cut-backs-foliage-obscuring-road-signs/>

Public urged to speak out to stop the UK's million drug drivers. Tuesday 5 August 2014

Brake, the road safety charity
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Members of the public are being urged to stand up to illegal drug drivers, as a [survey by Brake and Direct Line](#) finds the equivalent of one million UK drivers (3%) admit driving on drugs in the past year and just over one in ten (11%) think they may have been a passenger with one. At the same time, three in 10 (29%) admit they wouldn't always speak out to stop a friend driving on drugs.

The findings come shortly before a [new law](#), coming into force on 2 March 2015, will make it an offence to drive with drugs in your body in England and Wales, aiming to make it much easier to prosecute drivers on drugs.

Brake and Direct Line's survey findings suggest an alarming level of ignorance or complacency about the effects of illegal drugs, especially among male and young drivers:

- Three in 10 (29%) wouldn't always speak out if a friend was going to drive on drugs, and a significant one in 20 (5%) wouldn't speak out even if their friend was clearly out of control. This was most common among young (9%) and male (7%) drivers.
- Young people and men are also most likely to have possibly or definitely been a passenger with a driver on drugs. 18% of young drivers and 15% of male drivers say they have been in this situation in the past year. Full results below.

The [drug drive law](#) coming into force in March will make it a criminal offence to drive under the influence of drugs, with specified zero-tolerance limits enforced with roadside drug testing devices. Those found guilty will face a maximum six month jail sentence, £5,000 fine, and automatic 12 month driving ban. The law is also known as [Lillian's Law](#), after **14 year old Croydon school girl Lillian Groves, killed outside her home by a speeding driver on cannabis in June 2010**. The tireless campaigning of her family has been instrumental in changing the law, and [was honoured by Brake through an award last year](#).

Natasha Groves, Lillian's mum, said: "Lillian was a wonderful young girl who did not deserve to die. She lit up rooms and gave warmth to everyone she met. A child being so suddenly killed, in such a needless and destructive way, is something that tears a hole in the heart of your family; it creates a shadow over your home you can't get away from. But as a family, we felt we couldn't be defeated; we needed to do

something to prevent others suffering the way we have. That's why we fought so hard for a change in the law. Nothing will ever make up for the travesty of Lillian being stolen from us, but we urge all drivers never to drive after taking illegal drugs and save other families from going through the same ordeal we have."

Julie Townsend, deputy chief executive, Brake, said: "Drug driving is a menace that causes absolute devastation to families and communities, and ends too many lives too soon. We all need to stand up and fight to end it, as the Groves have done so bravely following the terrible death of Lillian. Our message to everyone is never to underestimate the effects of illegal drugs on driving. If someone is on drugs, they are not fit to drive, even if they don't seem obviously impaired. Look out for your friends, and if you think they might be driving on drugs, speak out. You will stop them putting innocent lives in danger, and you may stop them going to jail."

Rob Miles, director of car insurance at Direct Line, commented: "Drugs and driving are a deadly combination which can have devastating effects on people's lives, particularly in combination with alcohol. Driving under the influence of illegal drugs seriously compromises someone's ability to control a vehicle, affecting their judgement, their reactions and their ability to concentrate. Direct Line welcomes the drug drive law coming into force next March and hopes it will act as a deterrent to anyone tempted to drive after having taken illegal drugs."

Read about Brake's [Not a drop, not a drag](#) campaign. Tweet us: [@Brakecharity](#), hashtag #notadrag. Read the [survey report](#).

Facts

Illegal drugs have a variety of very serious negative effects on driving ability, and the effects can be highly unpredictable given their unregulated and variable nature. Drugs affect different people in different ways and the effects can last for days, sometimes without that person being aware of it. The likely effects of some common illegal drugs on driving include:

- Cannabis slows your reaction times, affects your coordination and concentration and makes you drowsy [1].
- 'Stimulant' drugs such as ecstasy, speed and cocaine distort your perceptions and make you jumpy. They can also make you over-confident or paranoid and confused [2].
- Heroin and other opiates make you feel relaxed and sleepy, slowing reaction times and impairing coordination [3].

Historically, levels of drug driving have not been fully recorded, but research suggests that the scale of the problem may be similar to drink-driving. A study by the Transport Research Laboratory has found that 18% of drivers and 16% of motorcyclists killed in road crashes had traces of illegal drugs in their system, the most common being cannabis [4]. It's been estimated that 200 deaths a year may result from drug driving [5].

As of 2 March 2015, it will be an offence to drive with drugs in your body in England and Wales, removing the need to prove impairment. The offence carries a maximum six month jail sentence, maximum £5,000 fine, and an automatic 12 month driving ban. Roadside drug testing devices will be used by police to catch drug drivers.

To find out more about drugs and their effects, visit the government's drug advice website at www.talktofrank.com.

Brake's advice

Never risk taking illegal drugs and driving. Their effects are unpredictable, but research shows they can have a disastrous impact on your ability to drive safely. Drugs and alcohol is an especially deadly combination.

It is impossible to judge how impaired you are or if a friend is impaired, so if you or a mate has been taking drugs, you should assume you're unfit to drive, even if you feel okay.

You don't have to be confrontational to speak out to someone who's thinking about drug driving. You can talk to them in a friendly way, explaining why it's a seriously bad idea to get behind the wheel. You could offer to call them a taxi, walk them to the bus stop or walk them home. If they are insistent on driving you might have to be more firm, take their keys or even call the police.

The effects of drugs can last a long time. They can also badly disrupt sleep and make you a risk behind the wheel for days as a result. That's why you can't have illegal drugs and driving in your life at the same time without posing a danger to yourself and others.

About the report

These survey results come from Section 6 of Report 2: Fit to Drive, part of the Direct Line and Brake report on safe driving, 2012-14, released today (Tuesday 5 August 2014). The survey consisted of 1,000 drivers and was conducted by Surveygoo. [Read the report.](#)

Full results

Q1: In the past 12 months, have you driven after taking illegal drugs?

- 97% said no
- 2% said yes – cannabis
- 1% said yes – cocaine
- 0.5% said yes – ecstasy
- 0.5% said yes – ketamine
- 0.5% said yes – LSD or mushrooms
- 0.5% said yes – amphetamines
- 0.5% said yes – heroin
- 0.5% said yes – other

Q2: In the past 12 months, have you been a passenger in a vehicle when the driver may have taken illegal drugs or still been affected from taking illegal drugs the night before?

- 2% said yes, definitely
- 4% said yes, probably
- 6% said yes, possibly
- 89% said no, definitely not

Q3: Would you speak up if a close friend was taking illegal drugs and intending to drive?

- 71% said yes, in any circumstances and on any amount of illegal drugs
- 21% said yes, but only if I could see they were obviously impaired in a way that might affect their driving
- 3% said yes, but only if they were clearly out of control or falling over
- 5% said no

Brake

[Brake](#) is a national road safety charity that exists to stop the needless deaths and serious injuries that happen on roads every day, make streets and communities safer for everyone, and care for families bereaved and injured in road crashes. Brake promotes road safety awareness, safe and sustainable road use, and effective road safety policies. We do this through national [campaigns](#), [community education](#), [services](#) for road safety professionals and employers, and by coordinating the UK's flagship road safety event every November, [Road Safety Week](#). Brake is a national, government-funded provider of [support](#) to families and individuals devastated by road death and serious injury, including through a helpline and support packs.

Brake was founded in the UK in 1995, and now has domestic operations in the UK and [New Zealand](#), and works globally to promote action on road safety.

Road crashes are not accidents; they are devastating and preventable events, not chance mishaps. Calling them accidents undermines work to make roads safer, and can cause insult to families whose lives have been torn apart by needless casualties.

Direct Line

Started in 1985, Direct Line became the first UK insurance company to use the telephone as its main channel of communication. It provides motor, home, travel and pet insurance cover direct to customers by phone or on-line.

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Direct Line and UK Insurance limited are both part of Direct Line Insurance Group plc. Customers can find out more about Direct Line products or get a quote by calling 0845 246 3761 or visiting www.directline.com.

End notes

[1] A-Z of Drugs: Cannabis, Talk to Frank www.talktofrank.com

[2] A-Z of Drugs: Cocaine, Ecstasy, Speed, Talk to Frank www.talktofrank.com

[3] A-Z of Drugs: Heroin, Talk to Frank www.talktofrank.com

[4] The Incidence of Drugs and Alcohol in Road Accident Fatalities, Transport Research Laboratory, 2000

[5] Driving under the influence of drugs: report from the expert panel on drug driving, Department for Transport, 2013

Charity urges government to make driver eyesight tests compulsory

Survey shows overwhelming public support [part]

Brake, the road safety charity, is calling on the government to introduce compulsory regular eyesight testing for drivers, as a [survey](#) with Specsavers and RSA Insurance Group shows strong public support. Almost nine in 10 (87%) are in favour of drivers having to prove they have had a recent sight test every 10 years, when they renew their licence or photo card. Research indicates this change in the law would significantly reduce the estimated 2,900 casualties caused by poor driver vision each year [1].

[The survey](#) shows why government action is needed, with **a quarter (25%) of drivers admitting they have not had their eyes tested in more than two years** – despite research showing you can lose up to 40% of your vision before noticing the difference [2].

Many drivers are also failing to respond to warning signs in regards to their vision: one in five (19%) have put off visiting the optician when they noticed a problem. In addition, a shocking **one in eight drivers (12%) who know they need glasses or lenses to drive have done so without them in the past year.**

Brake, Specsavers and RSA's [survey of drivers](#) also found: *(full results below)*

- More than 1.5 million UK drivers (4%) have never had their eyes tested;
 - One in eight (12%) have not had their eyes tested for more than five years; and
 - Of the 54% of UK drivers who believe they don't need glasses or lenses to drive, one third (33%) have no way of knowing this for sure, having not had an eyesight test in over two years.
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