



**February 2017
Network**

A networking tool for Activists and other interested parties

Editorial	2
Campaigns Team Report – Team Double L	2-4
This MAG article first appeared in BSH Issue 394, cover date Feb 2017	4-5
MAG Press Releases:- MAG starts new year happy after fast and furious 2016. MAG supports National Pothole Day. MAG to feature at N.I. Motorcycle Fest. MAG continues input to Silvertown Tunnel Consultation.	6-8
Highways England streets ahead on Road Planning for Motorcycles.	9
FEMA:- Paris starts enforcing low emissions zones. American Import Tax will hurt European Motorcycles. FEMA Presidents New Year Address.	9-12
An article from MAG’s National Reps Liaison Officer.	13-14
2017 could be tipping point year for potholes	14-15
Around GB:- Lancashire’s average speed cameras	15-16
PACTs launches new report on young road users.	16-17
Government allocates £1.2billion roads funding to Councils.	17-19
Dealerships and Training Schools sign up for new Kawasaki scheme	19
Contacts	19-20

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Editorial

Hope you're all good.

Of all the things that passed by my desk during the last four weeks two articles from FEMA stick out. As of now there is the requirement to display a sticker if going to France of your vehicles 'green credentials'. This is to enforce the low emissions legislation in Paris. Other cities may follow suit and, to be honest, its probably only a matter of time. Fines for failure to do so range from 68-135 euros. Stickers cost 3.50

euros and the FEMA article includes a link to a website where these can be obtained.

The second thing is the import tax introduced during this last week for goods into the USA. Its definitely not popular, either in Europe or the States.

For those of you going to the Bristol Classic Bike Show at Shepton Mallet look out for the MAG stand will be on the balcony of the Showering Pavilion.

AG

From our excellent Campaigns Team - L&L

Overview

The main activity at present is direct political engagement at local, municipal and national level. In addition, various consultations have been occupying a great deal of time, with MAG making more significant contributions on behalf of riders.

1. The next phase of the Silver Town Tunnel consultation held three more days of public hearings. MAG is concerned about one aspect of the project: user charging for motorcyclists. Lembit has made multiple representations on the social, environmental and traffic congestion related reasons which make charging bikers entirely contradictory versus the purpose of the scheme. A written submission is to follow. 'We've got to do everything to win our case here,' says Lembit. 'If user charging is brought in here, it will be brought in for other crossings and roads too. We've got to get them to see common sense.' The Motor Cycle Industry Association continues to support MAG's campaign.

2. In keeping with the importance of motorcycle crime, Kevin Howells, who is in charge of the Motorcycle Crime Reduction Group, will be addressing MAG's next National Committee in February 2017. The aim is to seek a common agenda which we can then work with interested parties, including the police, to implement and reduce the crime problem. The issue is acute in cities, with London continuing to be targeted by the criminals.

3. Leon has made considerable progress in building our case against the spread of 'Light Segregation' measures for Cycle Lane schemes e.g. Orcas and Armadillos. We now have all of the CCTV footage from The City of London on which they based their emergency decision to remove a scheme they had been vigorously 'encouraged' to put in. The footage proves that even 'Mini Orcas' do create Trip Hazards – and that people are tripped up by them into the path of oncoming traffic. Leon has also secured permission to share an edited version of the footage at Ministerial level, and ultimately with anyone interested in improving road safety. Producing an edited version is however a challenge as there is video from 4 cameras running 24/7 for 14 days.

4. We also now have a bank of evidence that is currently held in strict confidence and it shows how a regional UK Transport Authority was pressured into installing Cycle Scheme Segregation measures – and then had to remove the scheme due to the extent of problems it caused, including compensation claims for injuries caused by the scheme.

5. Our prospects of drawing attention to the pitfalls of Light Segregation at Ministerial level – and getting action taken to counteract the huge power that such entities as Sustrans and TfL have to promote such measure, have also been boosted. Leon has been in separate talks with two MPs who are actively supporting us. Chris Law, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Motorcycling Group has agreed to present our evidence to Andrew Jones MP who is Minister for Roads and Roads Safety. Meanwhile, Leon has also been in talks with the MP for Enfield, who has just had a brief initial meeting with Andrew Jones to share concerns about the adverse impacts of extreme measures to promote cycling such as TfL's £30 million Mini Holland scheme that is being imposed on his constituents.

6. Northern Ireland continues to evolve its MAG presence, with a stand planned for a show there from 3rd-5th February. At time of writing, Ian Churchlow, President Mutch and Lembit are all scheduled to attend and support the great work Martyn Boyd is doing to represent us there. If you'd like to help on the stand, please let Central Office know on 01926 844 064. Northern Ireland politics is in flux at the moment, and MAG is waiting to see what happens after the next round of elections which are pending.

7. MAG's relationship with the Bike Shed and their growing division of activists in London is continuing to develop in mutually beneficial ways. Leon is taking the lead for L&L on this. And, our London Rep, Tim Fawthrop, has done sterling work in strengthening links between MAG and bikers who see the Bike Shed as a physical and ideological base for developing their We Ride London campaign. This has common goals to ours, namely, to defend riders against new 'Emissions' taxes, lane narrowing and 'banning by tolls.' It seems that a new militancy has arisen amongst this category of bikers. We haven't yet managed to turn the tide on all of this,' says Leon, 'so we need all the help we can possibly get'. So, if you ride in London please call Central Office on 019 2684 4064 to see how you may be able to get involved.

8. The Modern Transport Bill is likely to make progress in 2017. This really relates to legislation about robot cars. There is some concern that so far the relationship between autonomous vehicles and motorbikes hasn't been sufficiently tested. It's one of many areas we'll return to as the year proceeds.

9. MAG has achieved coverage in various local and national media outlets, including a podcast by Lembit on Brexit, biking and other matters. Please take the opportunity to call your local radio stations and talk about biking whenever possible. They always welcome new callers and it's very helpful for biking to be heard on air.

10. Highways England held a high level summit on motorcycling matters, which MAG attended. This is likely to become an important policy making group, and so it's very good that MAG is in attendance. Lembit and Tony Cox are heading up our input to this unit, which meets roughly quarterly in Manchester.

This MAG article first appeared in BSH Issue 394, cover date Feb 2017

The highlight of the last month has been the 'Motorcycle Live' show at Birmingham's NEC. We had a great time with lots of people stopping by the stand, some to find out more about MAG and others to say thank you for all the hard work we do. It's thanks to the volunteers that raise money all year round and also those that give their time to man the stand over the nine days that we can be at such a prestigious show. As well as visitors to our stand we had the opportunity to talk to others in the industry and are very much looking forward to forging some new relationships over the coming year. Remember if you would like a MAG stand at an event you are involved in then do get in touch and we will do our best to provide a presence.

London has remained a focal point over the past month:

The All Party Parliamentary Motorcycle Group (APPMG) announced the appointment of a new Chair, Chris Law MP. The purpose of the APPMG is to "safeguard motorcycling interests by monitoring legislation for matters affecting motorcycling and taking remedial action where necessary; to represent motorcycling to fellow parliamentarians; to foster the good image of motorcycling and, by example, encourage others to take up motorcycling" (taken directly from www.parliament.uk). MAG's political team, Lembit and Leon, have already met with Chris, himself a biker, and feel positive about the way forward.

In regard to London's Ultra Low Emission Zone stage 2 of the consultation, which was designed to seek feedback, will have closed by the time you read this article. There is still stage 3 to go, which is where we will see if the pressure to date has had any effect. You may have noticed a new campaign that went live in November called WeRideLondon. MAG has been very much involved in the campaign.

For the latest information on London's ULEZ visit <https://is.gd/XNEINS>

The threat of charges being applied to riders when the new Silvertown Thames crossing opens remains on our radar and I will bring you developments as they occur. For the latest information, visit <https://is.gd/MdwqQJ>

As the winter weather sets in London's cycle super-highway is not exactly full of hardened cycle fans pedalling fast to keep warm. What is happening instead is that there are miles and miles of stationary

vehicles with their engines running to keep the occupants warm. It remains to be seen what the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, will do and what statistics will be released. Will we see figures that show the negative impact that squashing London traffic into narrowed streets is having on air quality?

All the above may be in London at present; however what happens in the nations' capital has a habit of spreading across the country so we do need to nip these things in the bud.

Here's an interesting fact: whilst researching to complete some of the many consultations that cross his desk Lembit happened upon the following piece of information. The M6 toll section, which levies a charge for motorcycles, shows the average motorcycle usage for that section of road is 0% of the traffic. Thus, charging motorbikes doesn't tend to increase revenue. It simply diverts bike traffic to other routes. This could be helpful if anyone is trying to introduce charges in your area.

There has unfortunately been some very negative press in regard to motorcycling, particularly around the time of Halloween. I'm sure most of you saw the stories of irresponsible and law-breaking activities taking place across several sites in the UK. MAG was quick to react to this. Along with others we feel that those involved in this behaviour were not a true representation of the biking community. We will continue to work with as many groups as possible promoting the positive image and impact of biking. The laws are already there for the police to take action against these riders, without the need for injunctions (which did nothing to prevent the Halloween disturbance).

The National Road Safety Conference took place in Bristol and MAG were represented at the meeting by Lembit, who was encouraged by the response to his input. It was clear that riders had not been fully considered, nor had all the suggestions been based on facts. This has resulted in several more invitations to give our views at events in 2017.

Armadillos and Orcas have not yet been eradicated from our shores; however Leon is keeping up the hunt and you can bet he will leave no stone unturned.

News just in from the Federation of European Motorcyclists' Association (FEMA, of whom MAG is a member) confirm that RDW, the Netherlands Vehicle Authority that issued the European type approval for Tesla autonomous cars, plans to co-operate with motorcyclists' organisations and conduct their own test program that should ensure motorcycles and other powered two wheelers are detected by the sensors of the car and respond correctly to their presence. This is a small step in the right direction and comes after hours of work. The full details are yet to be worked out with field test planned for 2017.

If you are looking for a winter ride with a purpose after all the toy runs are over, then do remember that many MAG groups around the country have arranged rides in memory of Fred Hill; you will find details of these on our website (www.mag-uk.org) and on Facebook (for our main page search motorcycle action group).

We will continue to promote the benefits of biking, not just in London but across the country as more cities and towns look to improve their air quality by penalising road users.

As always we look to you to help us in our quest by becoming a member, by signing up your mates and by becoming an activist if you have the time and skills to support biking.

Have a great 'New Year' and keep biking.

MAG PRESS RELEASES

MAG starts the New Year happy after ‘fast and furious’ 2016

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK’s leading voice for riders’ rights, has everything to look forward to in 2017: here’s why.

‘It’s breath-taking how much has happened in the world of riders’ rights over the last three years.’ So says Selina Lavender, the Chair of MAG, speaking about the prodigious output of the movement over the last twelve months. ‘Our staff had a fast and furious 2016 with immense challenges. These included legal, political and logistical issues, and they pretty much defined a year of hard graft. It also means we begin 2017 far ahead of where we were this time last year.’

What’s on the agenda for 2017? ‘We’ll be taking the same inclusive and team-spirited approach’ continued Selina. ‘We’re not looking for fights, we’re looking for allies - and that’s the hallmark of the organisation’s way of operating. We’ll be visiting the Department for Transport a lot, to discuss everything from how you get a bike licence through to the challenges presented by autonomous vehicles. There’s the threat of bikes being charged to use Thames crossings, a motorcycle and scooter theft epidemic, especially in London, and the use of overly-restrictive injunctions to control anti-social behaviour, which could potentially harm the freedoms of legitimate riders too. In every case we engage, debate and propose better solutions to shared concerns.

‘It’s not glamorous work, and it requires a great deal of research. But our team has proven its ability to deliver, and they’re building their credibility all the time. Let’s be clear: 2017 is going to be a big year for riders’ liberties. MAG is right up there defending your right to ride. We also invite dealers and the manufacturing sector to support our work. What we do sustains the market by defending the freedom to ride. It’s got to be a team effort, and we hope the sector as a whole will work to protect and promote riding in the years ahead – starting in 2017. If we can do that, it really will be a happy new year for biking.’

MAG invites riders, dealers, mechanics and manufacturers to join MAG and help create a united voice for the common good of the riding community.

MAG supports National Pothole Day

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK’s leading voice for riders’ rights, is encouraging everyone to support National Pothole Day on Monday 16th January. You can do this by reporting potholes via our new association with StreetRepairs.co.uk.

This is the third annual National Pothole Day campaign organised by StreetRepairs.co.uk. A staggering 89% of reports made by the public to the Street Repairs website relate to potholes. As riders we know the risks associated with potholes: it’s not just the damage to our bikes - it is the increased risk to our lives. If you can do one thing on Monday, please report that pothole you’ve been avoiding for ages at: : <http://www.mag-uk.org/en/campaignsdetail/a7288%22>

In recognition of National Pothole Day, Street Repairs has teamed up with MAG so that a reporting mechanism is linked from the [MAG](#) website - just click on the Street Repairs logo. Not only can you report the pothole issue, you also have the option to report any other road-related problem from missing manhole covers to street lighting, so stop moaning about it and do it now!

The combination of the increasing financial burden from pothole damage to riders, plus recent budget cuts to local authorities, means awareness of Street Repairs free service is more important than ever. The service offers a way for the authorities to engage with road-users to action any defects which are reported in real-time.

Mark Morrell (aka Mr Pothole), StreetRepairs.co.uk Press Officer said, 'Many millions of our followers and supporters have asked us to highlight the seriousness of this major problem. Just take a look at <https://www.thunderclap.it/projects/50549-national-pothole-day-2017> - that tells you the strength of feeling from the pothole-weary UK public. I use social media to produce mass awareness and continue to highlight this national issue. I can honestly say that the safety aspect alone from the Street Repairs website could save lives. No wonder public sentiment is very high in relation to this major issue.'

Selina Lavender, MAG National Chair, added 'We are very pleased to partner up with Street repairs at <http://streetrepairs.co.uk/> which will benefit all riders. MAG has for years highlighted road issues; older members will recall our yellow postcard-based system. For modern times, an App that allows riders to report faults in real-time is the obvious way to go. We encourage members to share this link with all their family and friends whether they ride or not.'

At time of writing, the thunderclap campaign has reached 2,169,878 people; please sign up and share on your social media.

MAG invites riders, dealers, mechanics and manufacturers to join MAG and help create a united voice for the common good of the riding community.

MAG to feature at Northern Ireland Motorcycle Fest

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) has announced that it will have a stand at the Northern Ireland Motorcycle Festival 2017.

MAG will be attending the 2017 N.I Motorcycle Festival from 3-5 February at The Eikon Centre, near Lisburn, where the Group will be welcoming a new generation of members and supporters of riders' rights. It's a special occasion as this is the first time the organisation has secured a stand at Eikon - a sign of MAG's new energy in the region.

Martyn Boyd, MAG's N.I. Regional Representative, is managing the stand for the duration of the show, which will also be attended by various senior figures within MAG. These include the President, Ian Mutch, who's giving a talk about his half-century on two wheels. This will be taking place at the Highway Inn at around 7pm in Lisburn on Saturday 4th February with free admission. Ian Churchlow, one of MAG's Directors, will also be at the show, and Director of Communications and Public Affairs, Lembit Öpik, will be there on Friday and Saturday.

Martyn Boyd commented: 'it's a good show, and we are delighted to be part of it this year. Carl

Fogarty is going to be there and he's a known fan of MAG. Why not follow his lead and come to say hello, whether or not you're a member? As an added incentive there's a competition: you can win a couple of tickets to get into the show courtesy of MAG NI and Nutt Travel. You'll find the details on our Facebook page.'

<https://www.facebook.com/NImotorcycleactiongroup/?ref=bookmarks>

The MAG team is looking forward to meeting you on the stand at L34.

Here's a link the show website:

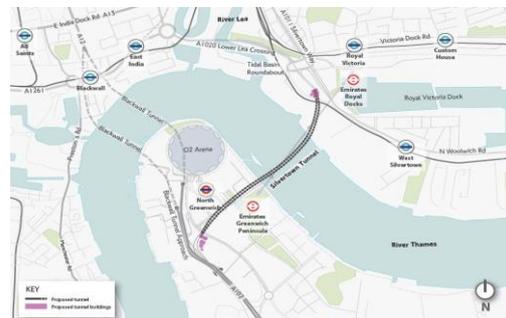
<http://www.eikoncomplex.co.uk/index.php/home/events/10212-n-i-motorcycle-festival-2017-eikon-exhibition-centre/10212-n-i-motorcycle-festival-2017-eikon-exhibition-centre>

MAG continues input to Silvertown Tunnel consultation

MAG has submitted further evidence to the inquiry into the proposed new Thames crossing – known as Silver Town Tunnel – near the Greenwich Peninsula, challenging the logic of charging motorcycles.

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) has once again called on the panel considering the operational conditions surrounding the proposed Silver Town Tunnel under the Thames to recommend abandoning plans to charge Powered Two Wheelers (PTWs) – namely motorcycles and scooters - for using the tunnel.

Lembit Öpik, MAG's Director of Communications & Public Affairs, invited the proposers of the scheme to explain why charging PTW riders makes any sense as this mode offers significant benefits when compared to cars or vans in terms of reducing pollution and congestion, and facilitating social and economic mobility when alternatives are too costly in time and/or money and a bicycle is, for whatever reason, not an option. Dr Leon Mannings, MAG's Campaigns and Policy Adviser commented: TfL's excellent study of motorcycle emissions clearly shows that enabling more modal shift from cars or vans to powered two wheelers cuts emissions of harmful gasses and reduces fossil fuel consumption in real-time journeys. Any new charge for bikes will have a negative impact on the scheme's own objective to cut congestion and emissions. If they're serious about cutting NOx & Co2, they should scrap plans to charge motorcycles.'



Lembit added: 'We've also highlighted the social injustice of charging riders. Many depend on their bikes specifically because they earn relatively modest incomes, which is why they ride to work. Charging them would potentially quadruple commuting costs, and cause bikers to seek other routes across the Thames, making their journeys longer for no benefit to anyone. If bikes are charged, then the charges must be made to apply to electric vehicles too, which add as much to congestion as any other car, and make far less social contribution to low paid workers. MAG will continue to strongly make these points, as we have done for many months now, to make sure fairness and common sense prevail.'

The sessions were held between 17th and 19th January in Newham.

Highways England 'streets ahead' on road planning for motorcycles

MAG has attended the latest round of Highways England discussions about the future of the strategic roads network. MAG is making an active contribution to resolving some of the challenges facing powered two-wheelers on our roads.

MAG attended the January meeting of the Highways England Motorcycle Working Group Communications Workshop, held on 16th January 2017 at the Highways England head offices in Central Manchester.

In a project-focused meeting, MAG offered to support the work in three key ways. These are: using key MAG events to showcase best practice in terms of the strategic roads network and motorcycle safety; discussing the main concerns of MAG in terms of the road safety agenda; and communicating messages through MAG's media outlets and its membership.

Tony Cox, MAG's Regional Representative in the North West, said "Lembit Öpik, MAG's Director of Communications & Public Affairs, who attended the forum, raised the issue of the impact of cycle-lane segregation, including orcas and armadillos, on biking road space and safety. He also covered infrastructure considerations affecting riders and debated how to raise awareness amongst other road users regarding the legality of 'filtering.'

"This was a mutually beneficial exchange and we're all working together to get these things right. Highways England has raised the game to a new level. I'm impressed by Highways England's approach – they're thinking like partners with us and others, and that's a very promising development for the riding community."

F E M A

Paris starts enforcing low emissions zones

byWimTaal - January 16, 2017

From 15th January 2017, those not complying with the low emission zone in Paris will be sent fines of between €68 and €135.

A low emission zone started in Paris on 1st July 2015. From 15th January 2017 the low emission zone will be enforced and a fine will be sent for not complying.

Vehicles driving in Paris need to have a 'Crit' Air' sticker, which shows the vehicle emissions. This sticker shows whether the vehicle is allowed to enter Paris. Low emission zone stickers cost €3,70 plus postage.

For vehicles not registered in France, the service for ordering the Crit'Air sticker will open on Wednesday the 1st of February 2017 on this website: <https://www.certificat-air.gouv.fr/>

In the meanwhile, the European Commission recommends that you have your vehicle papers and proof of Euro standard with you when you travel in Paris to avoid an expensive fine.

You can find the rules for all vehicles here, but these are the rules for motorcycles: <http://urbanaccessregulations.eu/countries-mainmenu-147/france/paris>

From 1 January 2017, Monday to Friday 08:00 – 20:00: motorcycles must be first registered after 1 June 2000 (usually Euro 2) – Crit'Air sticker 4

Euro standards are the main way of classifying vehicle emissions. In many countries this information is on the vehicle registration papers. Otherwise, the vehicle age and type will give a guide to its Euro standards. Low emission zones sometimes use vehicles ages where there is no other information available, as it is a good guide to most vehicles Euro standards, particularly for conventionally fuelled cars.

Guide: <http://urbanaccessregulations.eu/countries-mainmenu-147/france/paris>

Written by WimTaal

Source: European Commission.

American Import Tax will hurt European Motorcycling

The United States want to punish the European Union by raising the import tax for a lot of products from Europe, including motorcycles.

The reason for this proposal <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=USTR-2016-0025-0001>: the European Union bans the import of American beef and beef products produced from animals that have been given growth hormones. The Office of United States Trade Representative proposes to add an import tax on motorcycles with an engine size between 51cc and 500cc imported from the European Union.

The American riders

The American Motorcyclist Association ([AMA](#)) opposes the proposed tariff, because trade disputes residing within the boundaries of the agricultural industry should not be solved with trade sanctions levied against non-agricultural products. "There is no logical link between motorcycles and beef," said Wayne Allard, AMA vice president of government relations. "It is absurd to even consider such a move." The Office of the US Trade Representative is responsible for developing and coordinating US international trade, commodity and direct investment policy and overseeing negotiations with other countries. The head of USTR is the U.S. Trade Representative, a Cabinet member who serves as the president's principal trade adviser, negotiator, and spokesperson on trade issues.

According to the AMA, if the agency enacts this motorcycle tariff, serious and potentially irreversible harm will be done to American small- and medium-sized business owners selling the vehicles and to American families who buy these motorcycles for commuting and outdoor recreation. The same agency tried the same tactic in 2008, but the effort was thwarted when the AMA, the Motorcycle Industry Council and bike manufacturers and retailers rallied motorcyclists against the plan. At that time, the US Trade Representative instead raised the tariff on a variety of European food products. "Should the availability of motorcycles be hindered by these unjustified trade sanctions, dealerships may close, leaving countless Americans without jobs," Allard said. "The negative effects of the proposed sanctions will not only harm the motorcycle sales industry, but will spread through the aftermarket equipment sector, recreation equipment sales, the sports entertainment industry and further down the line."

The European motorcycle industry

[ACEM](#), (Association des Constructeurs Européens de Motocycles), representing the motorcycle industry in Europe, isn't happy with the proposed extra import tax on motorcycles.

ACEM's Secretary General, Antonio Perlot, told FEMA: "An inclusion of motorcycles in a list of items subject to higher duties when entering the US would negatively impact manufacturers producing motorcycles up to 500 cc originating from Europe. Such a measure would not only negatively affect the European industry, but also the US consumer, economically and potentially in terms of choice."

Antonio continues: “There is no justification for such measure – the motorcycle sector should not be dragged into trade disputes over food products. ACEM, as the representative of motorcycle manufacturers in Europe, is obviously following this issue closely.”

The European riders

FEMA (Federation of European Motorcyclists' Associations) is very concerned about the proposed tariff. There is no relation between the European vision on meat from the United States from cows treated with hormones and the European motorcycle industry. There is no reason why European manufacturers and American riders should be punished for a agricultural conflict between the United States and Europe. FEMA will send a written comment to the US Trade Representative this week to protest against these plans.

FEMA's General Secretary Dolf Willigers: “We strongly oppose these tariffs for several reasons. First out of solidarity with our American fellow riders, who will not be able to buy and ride affordable small and mid-ranged European motorcycles. They use them for commuting and sports, since many of them are off-road and trial models. Secondly this affects European motorcycle manufacturers and suppliers, their workers and the families of the workers. Some smaller manufacturers are largely dependent on the export of their products to the United States and are directly threatened in their existence. People could lose their jobs and families could lose their income.”

Dolf continues: “This will also mean that European riders will be limited in their opportunities to choose a light or mid-range motorcycle. What worries me most is that a predictable answer from the European Union will be to have counter measures like reciprocal tariffs on American motorcycles. In 2015 Harley-Davidson alone sold 37,000 motorcycles in Europe. If the European Union decides to put a high tariff on American motorcycles, nobody can afford them anymore. That will have an impact on the lifestyle of many riders. This also will have an enormous impact on the livelihood of many European entrepreneurs and workers and their families. This kind of conflict should be solved by talks and negotiations, not by starting a trade-war at the cost of motorcyclists and workers in the motorcycle industry.” *Written by [Wim Taal](#)*

FEMA President's New Year Address

For FEMA, 2016 was a year that took us from strength to strength. I have been active in the international motorcycle world for many years, but for the first time in years I had a real sense that we were seen and heard as the motorcyclists' voice.

Our team was expanded this year when we hired Wim Taal as our new communications officer. With eighteen years' experience in Dutch riders' rights he proved to be the right

person to work with our general secretary Dolf Willigers, who cannot be praised enough for his tireless work in Brussels.

The cooperation with FIM Europe has grown into a stable 'relationship' and we are planning a long list of issues for the FEMA/FIM Europe working group, chaired by our very own Morten Hansen, general secretary for NMCU, our Norwegian member organization.

Last year I promised you that FEMA would be actively looking for and talking to national riders' organizations all over Europe, inviting them to join FEMA. We have met with a lot of motorcyclists from all over Europe and we are proud to say that we have actually been able to welcome a new member: the Cyprus Motorcycle Rights Club (CMRC). Hopefully we can add more members to our growing FEMA family in 2017.

In 2016 we have spent a lot of time and effort on the issue of autonomous driving cars and the questions we had about the impact of these cars on the safety of motorcyclists. Those of you that follow FEMA's work will know that thanks to the hard work and tenacity of our staff, a new test protocol is in the making. In 2017 we will keep working with vehicle authorities to ensure that this new protocol is further developed that makes it mandatory to test autonomous driving cars with motorcycles before they can receive a European type approval. FEMA has received a lot of international praise for our role in the debates about autonomous driving vehicles and about Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems (C-ITS). I can guarantee you that in 2017 we will stay on top of these subjects, making sure motorcyclists are represented and listened to.

More and more cities are restricting vehicle access to the city's centre, in an attempt to counter congestion and pollution problems. FEMA and all its national member organizations will keep explaining that it is wrong to punish motorcyclists for problems mainly caused by cars and trucks. Authorities and city councils that are looking for solutions to their congestion and pollution problems should accept and acknowledge that motorcycles are part of the solution, not of the problem. A real effective urban mobility strategy must include powered two wheelers.

Finally, let me wish you a wonderful 2017. Let it be the year that motorcyclists from all over Europe unite to fight the good fight. *Anna Zee, President.*

An article from our National Reps Liaison Officer – Jane (Mrs Root Veg) Carrot

R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

(or “I really must get rid of this bonnet: it’s full of bees!”)

A View From The Veg Patch

From time to time I have a pace around the Allotment and think about Life, the Universe and Everything. The answer tends not, however, to be 42.

Lately, what with all the dreadful things happening around the world, I’ve turned my vegetative cogitations to how we treat each other as human beans. And I came to the conclusion that we’re not really doing terribly well at the moment. Country against country, government against its people, big business against little business... and the list gets depressingly long. But how do we get to this point? How do we reach a point where a whole nation is bullying another nation, or a government is not listening to its people?

Well, of course, it all starts on a much smaller scale: Fred at the office, Ethel two doors down, Irene who runs the local Fruit & Veg Club and, yes really, me and you. Before we can start to put the Actual World to rights, which is a Big Ask, we need to start closer to the Potting Shed.

It’s the little things that count, ultimately. Holding the garden gate open for someone; thanking someone for holding the garden gate open for you. Saying “let me help you with that heavy bag of compost”.

It saddens me particularly when I hear of problems within MAG that prevent us from moving along in a positive way, so that we can concentrate on riders’ rights. It is abundantly clear that MAG tends to draw people who hold passionate beliefs. This is a good thing in many ways, because it gives the organisation focus, energy and drive. But sometimes we lose that focus, and end up biffing each other round the bonce with a garden fork just because we don’t agree on something or we’ve taken a dislike to someone.

It is too easy to let personalities get in the way of the good work we can achieve. Too many times I come across situations where communications have broken down somewhere within the organisation because somebody has taken a dislike to somebody else, decided that they don’t want to cooperate anymore or remembered that they said something nasty once back in nineteen-hundred-and-frozen-to-death. We have to get past this and accept that we’ve volunteered to help and accept the other volunteers as well (after all, we’ve got one big thing in common straightaway: we’ve all joined MAG!). It’s not always easy to see beyond the personality to the skills that are being brought to a role but we really have to try. I still remember an occasion years ago when I had to put aside my personal feelings towards someone standing for office and vote them in because they were the best person for that role at that time.

We’re all guilty from time to time (and I include myself in this) of allowing our bonnets to get cluttered up with too many bees. Bees are a good thing, but they should be buzzing about in the garden doing good bee things. The sort of bee that I’ve described above is the sort of bee that needs releasing back into the wild so that we can get on with getting along together and pulling in the same direction.

Often, all it needs is taking a moment to check that what we’re doing will complement what others are doing rather than hinder them. For example, if a new MAG branch is starting up or a branch is looking to change its meeting night, check whether there are other branches in the region and, if there are, when they meet. This way you can ensure that your meetings don’t clash, which could cause friction.

Regional Reps: do you always remember to keep your branches in the loop with regular updates on all things MAG? It might be that there are branches who feel a bit out on a limb (*see what I did there?!*) and need a bit of TLC.

Branches: are you feeding back to your Regional Rep so that they know what you need by way of support to help you be an effective lobbying tool? Remember, they can only help you if they know you want help!

It's all about The C Word: COMMUNICATION! None of us has a crystal ball to gaze into. As someone once said many years ago in an advert – "it's good to talk".

Of all the unpleasanties that I come across, one makes me particularly cross. The misuse and abuse of (anti)social media. Of all the issues that we face, it seems that ethereal places like My Facetube Bingbong Space are the ones that cause the most friction and problems. So much so, in fact, that we have had to write guidelines on appropriate behaviour into the new Reps' Handbook and even generate a Code of Conduct that will ultimately be signed by all incoming officers. How did we get to a situation where we have to tell people what is and is not appropriate behaviour? At what point did we decide that it's OK to be unpleasant, to conduct a feud, to be obstructive?

So, a plea from the Veg Patch: please be nice to each other, please be considerate when dealing with each other and please, above all else, stop holding grudges and get on with the riders' rights you all care about. Release your bees and be a better person. Otherwise I might have to chastise you with my specially sharpened dibber...

2017 could be 'tipping point year' for potholes: LGA

Local authorities are warning that 2017 'could be a tipping point year' for potholes, with new analysis showing the repair bill could reach £14bn within two years - three times more than councils' combined annual revenue spending on highways and transport.

In a press release issued on 6 January, the Local Government Association (LGA), which represents more than 370 councils in England and Wales, says it is 'wrong and unfair' that the Government allocates almost 40 times more to maintaining national roads, which it controls, compared with local roads.

According to statistics from the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA), the 'one-time cost' to get roads in England and Wales back into reasonable condition was £11.8bn in 2016, up from £9.8bn in 2012. The LGA says this figure is projected to rise to £14bn by around 2019 - more than three times local authorities' combined annual revenue spend on highways and transport (£4.4bn) - which, in addition to highways maintenance, has to cover issues such as the concessionary fares scheme for buses.

The LGA is calling on Government to inject a further £1bn annually into roads maintenance, which it says could be raised by investing just 2p per litre of existing fuel duty. The LGA says previous polling shows that 83% of the population would support this reallocation of funds.

Cllr Martin Tett, LGA transport spokesman, said: "This year could be a tipping point year regarding potholes and councils, who have experienced significant budget reductions, now face the looming prospect of a bill of £14bn to bring the nation's roads up to scratch.

"It is becoming increasingly urgent to address the roads crisis we face as a nation. Councils fixed a pothole every 15 seconds again last year despite significant budget reductions leaving them with less to spend on fixing our crumbling roads.

"Local authorities are proving remarkably efficient in how they use this diminishing funding pot but they remain trapped in a frustrating cycle that will only ever leave them able to patch up our deteriorating roads."

The RAC says the AIA analysis is a reminder of the 'dire state' of local roads and advocates a long-term approach to tackle the crisis.

Nick Lyes, RAC roads policy spokesman, said: "This analysis provides a stark reminder of the dire state of the UK's local road network and ominously shows that things look set to get worse over the coming years unless urgent action is taken.

"We urge the Government to take a long-term, strategic approach to tackling this crisis, which provides local authorities with greater funding certainty so they can undertake the necessary maintenance and preventative action."

- See more at: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/5503.html#sthash.nwwOO7Gd.dpuf>

Local Gov.uk: http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10180/8140445/NEWS

RAC: <http://www.rac.co.uk/press-centre#/news/rac-responds-to-lga-potholes-warning-long-term-approach-needed-to-tackle-the-crisis-211600>

AROUND GB

Average speed cameras to be installed in Lancashire

The Lancashire Road Safety Partnership* (LRSP) has revealed plans to install average speed camera systems on some of the county's most dangerous roads in an attempt to cut the number of casualties.

Announced yesterday (9 Jan), the eight routes selected have seen a total of 406 casualties over the last six years, with 13 people killed. 62 people have suffered 'life changing' injuries.

Work has already begun to install the cameras, which will become live at staggered intervals between now and the end of 2017.

LRSP and Lancashire Constabulary opted for average speed cameras on the basis that the system has enhanced safety and achieved motorist compliance on a variety of road types in other parts of the UK.

LRSP points to research by the RAC Foundation which shows that fatal and serious collisions decrease by around a third after average speed cameras are introduced.

As part of the LRSP average speed project, research will be conducted to review speed data, traffic flow and casualty information on all of the routes.

The partnership says the introduction of the system is intended to positively influence driver behaviour and ensure motorists comply with the set limits on roads, resulting in a safer environment for all road users.

Assistant chief constable Tim Jacques, chair of the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership, said: "We don't want to catch you speeding. Our primary aim is for all drivers to adhere to the safe speed limits on our roads, and these particular roads are proven to be amongst some of our most dangerous.

"It is well researched and documented that speeding can kill, but we know that a combination of education, engineering and enforcement can change behaviours and save lives. This is particularly important where there are recurring problems.

"The Partnership vision, 'Towards Zero', is that we work towards preventing all collisions that result in death or serious injury. Using clearly signed average speed cameras will play a vital role as part of this vision."

*The Lancashire Road Safety Partnership includes representatives from Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Blackpool Council, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, Highways England and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

- See more at: LRSP: http://www.safe2travel.co.uk/more_info.asp?current_id=214

LRSP: http://www.safe2travel.co.uk/more_info.asp?current_id=89

RSGB: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/5331.html>

PACTS Launches New Report On Young Road Users

January 26, 2017

Zero tolerance on drink driving, additional hazard perception training and graduated forms of licensing should become the norm to help tackle the disproportionate risks faced by young drivers and motorcycle riders in Europe, according to the YEARS report (Young Europeans Acting for Road Safety), launched today (26 January).

Full report available here: http://www.pacts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/YEARSREPORT_final.pdf

More than 3,800 young people (aged 18-24) were killed on EU roads in 2013 – the biggest single cause of death for this age group. According to the report by the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) and the UK Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS), young people continue to face a unique combination of factors that leads to a higher rate of collisions and deaths.

Young riders are particularly at risk, with deaths for moped riders peaking between the ages of 15 and 17 and for motorcycle riders between 18 and 24.

Biological and social changes between the ages of 15-25 affect the risk perception of young people, according to the report. A lack of experience on the road also means that they are worse at anticipating and reacting to hazards, and less aware of how best to drive and ride in particular road conditions and situations.

A range of impairments and distractions affect young people, linked to increased social activity, greater exposure to alcohol and drugs, the influence of peer-age passengers and the effects of fatigue. In-car distraction from mobile devices is also a problem. Young people tend to drive smaller and older vehicles. These cars often have a lower crashworthiness star rating, and lack the safety technologies featured in newer models. The use of seat belts and protective clothing is also poor amongst young people.

The UK has a good overall road safety record but as in many other European countries, young motorcyclists and drivers form a disproportionately high percentage of deaths.

Most other countries in Europe do not allow young people to drive unsupervised until they are 18. They also have longer periods between beginning to learn to drive and driving solo, which allows young people to build up more driving experience before taking their test. In the UK the minimum age for independent driving is 17.

However, the UK has also been leading the way when it comes to hazard perception testing and telematics based insurance for young drivers.

The report makes a number of key recommendations for urgent action including:

- Better enforcement of speed and drink-drive limits, seat belt wearing and mobile phone use: this particularly benefits young road users;
- Encouraging more accompanied driving to help young people gain experience;
- Adopting licensing systems that encourage young people to gain more experience while limiting certain high-risk activities such as driving at night and with passengers;
- Lowering the alcohol limit for young drivers;
- A greater focus on safety initiatives for young riders; and
- Enabling and encouraging young people to use safer cars.

Commenting on the report, David Davies, Executive Director of the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety said: “The scale of death and injury involving young drivers and riders is a tragedy. They continue to make up a disproportionate number of road casualties – in the UK and across Europe. We need policymakers to commit to introducing proven measures that can help reduce this risk.

“The UK has led the way in Europe in aspects of improving the safety of young road users, including hazard perception testing and telematics-based insurance. PACTS welcomes the current proposals by the Government and DVSA to change the driving test and improve motorcycle training.

“More however, could and should be done. This is particularly important as the UK is one of the few countries in Europe where 17 is the driving test age. We need to find ways to encourage young drivers to use safer cars, and to get more experience and hazard perception training before taking the test. We can also learn from our other countries which have lower drink-drive limits for novice drivers and ways to encourage or require drivers to get more experience before taking the test.

“Traffic law enforcement of speed, seat-belt wearing, mobile phone use and drink/drug driving are particularly important to the safety of young road users. The reduction in police enforcement is very worrying.”

The YEARS project receives financial support from the European Commission, the German Road Safety Council (DVR) and the Belgian Road Safety Institute.

Report available:

<http://etsc.eu/reducing-casualties-involving-young-drivers-and-riders-in-europe/>

http://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017_01_26_young_drivers_report.pdf

Government allocates £1.2 billion roads funding to councils

Department for Transport and Andrew Jones MP . 13 January 2017

£1.2 billion local roads funding to improve roads, cut congestion and improve journey times.

- 2017 to 2018 financial year council funding to improve safety, repair potholes and cut congestion
- trial of revolutionary spotter to identify future potholes
- government support for new M11 junction supporting 15,000 new homes

Councils across England are today finding out their share of £1.2 billion local roads funding for the 2017 to 2018 financial year, Transport Minister Andrew Jones has announced.

The funding to improve roads, cut congestion and improve journey times includes money from the new National Productivity Investment Fund, announced in the Autumn Statement and the Pothole Action Fund. It also includes £75 million which councils can bid for to repair and maintain local infrastructure such as bridges, street lighting and rural roads.

The government has today also published further information about what the funding will be spent on - the latest step in the economic plan to stimulate the economy and build a country that works for everyone. A key part of this is putting in place improved transport links including better roads, to help people access work, school and services.

Transport Minister Andrew Jones said:

“ Roads play a significant part in everyday life linking people with jobs and businesses with customers, which is why this government is investing record amounts improving and maintaining highways across the country to help motorists.

“The funding we have allocated today is focused on relieving congestion and providing important upgrades to ensure our roads are fit for the future - helping to build an economy that works for everyone.

In a further effort to reduce the number of potholes the Department for Transport (DfT) will begin a new innovative trial, in partnership with Thurrock and York Councils which could revolutionise the way potholes are identified and managed. A pothole-spotter system, mounted to refuse collection vehicles, comprising of high-definition cameras, integrated navigation system and intelligent software will be deployed to identify road surface problems before they become potholes.

Following the announcement last week that the government will build 200,000 homes, the DfT will also support plans for a new motorway junction on the M11, near Harlow in Essex. This will help to ensure the delivery of 15,000 homes and support continued growth in the local economy. The new junction, to be known as Junction 7A, will sit to the north of Harlow, and will cut several minutes from journeys to Stansted and Cambridge.

The scheme will provide better access to the motorway both for new residents and for the existing inhabitants of Harlow and Sawbridgeworth; plus less congestion on the existing junction 7. The project will be part-funded by Essex County Council, and could begin construction in 2019.

The £1.2 billion for the 2017 to 2018 financial year consists of:

- £210 million from the National Productivity Investment Fund announced in the Autumn Statement when the Chancellor committed to invest an extra £1.3 billion improving the road network over the course of the Parliament. From this, £185 million will be allocated in the 2017 to 2018 financial year to local highway authorities in England, outside London, to improve local highways and public transport networks with the remainder of the funding of £25 million being available for safer roads to help tackle some of the most dangerous A roads
- £801 million to be shared across local highway authorities in England, outside London, to help improve the condition of local roads
- £70 million to be shared across local highway authorities in England, outside London, from the Pothole Action Fund which will help repair over 1.3 million potholes
- £75 million from the Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund, inviting local highway authorities in England, outside London, to compete for funding to help repair and maintain local highway infrastructure, such as bridges, lighting and rural roads

- £75 million from the Highways Maintenance Incentive Element which invites to complete a self-assessment questionnaire in order to reward those who demonstrate they truly understand the value of their asset

Further details of funding allocations, including break downs by local authorities:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/roads-funding-information-pack>

Dealerships and training schools sign up for new Kawasaki scheme

Motorcycle dealerships and training schools across the country are signing up to a new scheme backed by Kawasaki to create a UK-wide network of approved training bodies.

Kawasaki Rider Training Services (KRTS) was launched in July 2016 and offers professional rider training to industry leading and MCIAC (The Motorcycle Industry Accreditation Centre) endorsed standards.

When launching the scheme, Mark Spiller, Kawasaki's marketing manager, said the company plans to create 'around 60 KRTS training schools associated or affiliated to our dealer network' within the next three years.

The facilities at the schools and dealerships remain independent but are officially endorsed and branded by Kawasaki.

Those who take the course will learn to ride on new, well-maintained Kawasaki bikes - the KLX 125 for Learners and CBT courses and the ER650 for full licence courses.

Motorcyclists are one of the most vulnerable of road user groups. Statistics published in June 2016 by the DfT, Welsh Government and Transport for London all highlighted an increase in motorcycle casualties in 2015, against a backdrop of static or declining casualty figures for most other road users.

That said, statistics published by the DfT in November show that between April-June 2016, there was a 5% fall in the number of motorcycle KSIs, compared with the same period in 2015.

- See more at: KRTS: <http://www.kawasaki-krts.co.uk/>

RS GB: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/5159.html>

DfT Stats:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/564941/quarterly-estimates-april-to-june-2016.pdf

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