



Autumn definitely feels like it's with us now, with lots fewer "bike-friendly" sunny days on the horizon. MAG, however, will still be out there fighting tirelessly for our rights as riders. Thanks for your continued support and, if it's that time of the year, don't forget to renew your membership. We need you!

Next Month – Blackpool MAG Halloween Hootenanny 26th Oct



Next month sees the return of Blackpool MAG's famous "**Halloween Hootenanny**", now relocated to the fantastic **Waterloo Music pub** in Blackpool (also known as the "Wembley of Crown Green Bowls"). Music will be provided by the superb **Rupert Fabulous**, which is guaranteed to be good. Entry is by donation on the door, so the more you give, the more MAG gets. See you there.

MAG's Annual General Conference 2019 – Dewsbury, West Yorkshire



Yorkshire MAG did an excellent job hosting the MAG National AGC at the weekend in Dewsbury. The rain did not deter the delegates and once again it was an excellent turnout to this annual event. Amongst the awards given was one in recognition of the work that Daryl Whitby has given to the group over the past 25 years. Daryl was the Bolton Rep for many years running the group alongside his club, DNA MCC. Daryl also helped run the NW Motorcycle Forum, a means by which NW clubs could communicate events amongst each other avoiding conflict and maximising support. This was the forerunner to the North West Motorcycle Alliance which Daryl started in 2012 with the assistance of one of the NW's MCs, details of which are published every month in this newsletter.

Not-so-Smart Motorways



A programme to remove the hard shoulder from motorways is putting broken-down vehicles at risk, government analysis has found.

A report from Highways England said that drivers were three times more likely to break down in a fast-moving “live” lane when the hard shoulder had been removed. It also suggested that CCTV operators took an average of 20 minutes to spot a stranded vehicle and close the lane for it to be recovered. In one case a vehicle was left for more than an hour.

Highways England has pledged to introduce radar technology across the “smart

motorway” network, where the hard shoulder is removed to boost capacity, to detect stranded vehicles more quickly. However, data obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by the AA showed that only 24 miles had been fitted with the technology. It is used on two parts of the M25 around London, meaning it covers only 18 per cent of stretches where the hard shoulder is permanently removed. Other stretches rely on manual CCTV operators.

Highways England has said that smart motorways are safer. However, the AA said that the conclusions cast doubt on the claims and has called for a halt to the removal of hard shoulders. In March an 83-year-old man was killed when his van was hit by another vehicle after coming to a halt on a section of the M1 without a hard shoulder in Derbyshire. A woman was killed on the same stretch last September after getting out of her broken-down car. Edmund King, president of the AA, said: *“This is a truly shocking revelation and shows just how dangerous it can be breaking down in a live lane. Ultimately, until you are found by the camera you are a sitting duck. Expecting someone to wait in a dangerous and life-threatening position for 20 minutes is simply inexcusable.”*

Smart motorways without hard shoulders have emergency lay-bys, typically 1.5 miles apart, and red X signs are placed on gantries to close lanes if a vehicle stops in the road. The system is used on motorways including parts of the M1, M6, M3, M4, M5 and M25. Highways England published a report in March 2016 analysing the benefits of radar technology. It said that 33 vehicles had stopped on a section of motorway without it and that the average time between a vehicle stopping and being located by a CCTV operator was 17 minutes and 1 second.

Highways England’s regional control centres have a target to close lanes with red X signs within three minutes of a stranded vehicle being spotted, suggesting that vehicles could be left for 20 minutes on average in a live lane. It said that the hazard increased by 216 per cent compared with a conventional motorway with three lanes and a hard shoulder but that radar detected vehicles 16 minutes more quickly.

A Highways England spokeswoman said: *“The evidence is clear that smart motorways improve safety, with or without automatic stopped vehicle detection systems. The latest generation of smart motorways have helped to improve safety by at least 25 per cent. Our trials on the M25 have shown that a stopped vehicle detection system can be a valuable extra tool to help spot incidents more quickly, and the technology is being designed into all the smart motorway projects that we start constructing from next year.”*

Personally, I’d rather break down on the hard shoulder than on a working lane. But that’s just me.

Reinventing the wheel

The insurance industry's research body, Thatcham Research, has produced new safety rules that could allow driverless vehicles on motorways within two years. The guidelines say that motorists should be able to take their hands off the wheel and eyes off the road as long as the vehicle checks that the driver has not fallen asleep and only happens on motorways.

Meanwhile, some of the world's biggest makers of autonomous cars want regulators to take away the requirement for steering wheels, pedals and mirrors. Waymo, the self-driving car company owned by Alphabet, Google's parent company, has written to the National Highway Traffic Safety

Administration (NHTSA) in the United States to say that it "should move rapidly" to remove the "regulatory barriers" that require the company to include steering wheels. Honda, Uber and Lyft, which are developing autonomous cars, also told the NHTSA that it may be best to recognise self-driving cars as a separate vehicle class to address the rules.

The NHTSA had asked for comments on a proposal to amend the 75 rules that all carmakers must meet to put vehicles on the road. Many assume that a driver is in command and so require a steering wheel and pedals. However, companies say that self-driving cars do not need such controls and requiring them to be included delays the ability to put autonomous cars on the road. They say that only by cutting out a human completely can a self-driving car operate safely, removing the danger of a driver not knowing whether he or she should take control of the vehicle at any moment.

Safety campaigners have urged regulators to take their time in making any changes. The Centre for Auto Safety "strongly questions" the NHTSA's decision to make these rule changes a priority given that self-driving cars are still in their *"infancy and quite likely decades away from widespread practical utility"*. Almost every company trying to make fully autonomous cars has scaled back their rhetoric in recent months on how quickly cars that do not need human assistance will be on the road. Most believe that the technology is more than a decade away. The hype around the technology has also dimmed after an incident in March last year, when a 49-year-old woman was killed by a self-driving Uber, with a human monitor behind the wheel, as she crossed a road in Tempe, Arizona.

Raquel Urtasun, Uber's chief scientist at its advanced technologies group unit, said that it was "going to take a long time" before self-driving cars were ready for widespread use. Waymo launched a self-driving taxi service for some customers in Chandler, Arizona, last year, but it still requires a driver to be behind the wheel and take control if the car gets confused.

John Krafcik, Waymo's chief executive, said that self-driving cars were likely to require driver assistance for decades to come. The technology is "really, really hard", he said last year.

The NHTSA is unlikely to completely rewrite the safety rules for cars until 2025, according to Reuters, but the British government is likely to watch what the US does. In February the Department for Transport announced plans to scrap the requirement for a dedicated safety driver.

The jury is still out whether this will improve safety for bikers or potentially make things worse. MAG will be making sure that law-makers remember that bikes need to be taken into account when changes are planned.



North West Motorcycle Alliance

This is not a MAG organisation but a monthly meet for all bike clubs, organisations and interested bikers anywhere from Cheshire up to Lancaster. The next meeting is hosted by the **Veterans' Garage, Liverpool Rd, Eccles, Manchester M30 7SA at 8pm on Wednesday 30th October 2019. Please check the NW Alliance website for any last minutes changes to venue/dates– they do happen!** Here is the latest, up to date list of biker events this autumn which the Alliance has put together, which includes a few changes from the previous month.

Regular monthly events

HAMC Liverpool Open night 3rd Saturday of month, open 7.30 'til late - **next Open Night on Friday 18th October**

HAMC Manchester Open night last Saturday of month - free entry, great bands, food available, open 7.30 'til late

Red Devils MC Manchester Open Night every Friday at the clubhouse in Hindley

Red Rose MAG – meetings suspended until new venue found

MT Heads Meet – Flying Horse Rochdale 8pm every Monday

Road Reapers MCC - meet 1st Sunday 1pm & 2nd Wednesday at 7.30 at the Ellesmere Rd Rec Club, Bolton

Bury the Hatchett MCC - meet at the Two Tubs pub Bury at 7.30 every Thursday

Ronin MCC – every Saturday night @ the Plough, Hazel Grove

Road Slayers Brotherhood every 2nd Friday at the Veterans' Garage Barton

British Bulldogs MCC – every Wednesday at the Balcarres Arms, Wigan WN2 1PA

Spartan MCC meet every Thursday at Railway Linnet pub Middleton, M24 1GQ

Brigantia Rebels MCC meet at the Old Springs, Spring Rd, Wigan WN5 0JJ 1st Saturday at 7pm & 3rd Sunday at 3pm

Leyland Eagles MCC meet 3rd Mondays at Leyland RAFA Club

Avernus MCC – meet at the Red Herring, Mill Lane Coppull PR7 5AN every other Friday

RBLR meet 2nd Mondays at St.Chad's Club, Whittle-le-Woods

Life Behind Bars MCC meet every other Sunday – Hare & Hounds, 170 Outwood Rd, Radcliffe

Lioness MCC 1st and 3rd Wednesday @ Hope View farm, Astley M29 7LH – free food!

Throttle Twisters MCC every Monday – The Rifle Range pub, Burnley lane, Chadderton

Veterans Garage open at Barton Aerodrome every Monday 6pm onwards

Rising Moon Bike Night – Wednesdays at the Travellers Call, Bredbury. Bike Night every month

Norsemen MCC – every Wednesday of every month @ Irlam Social Club

Wild Bulls MCC meet every other Thursday at 7.30 in Speakeasy Bar, Preston.

Accrington MCC meet every other Sunday at the Poplar Club, Accrington

Boggarts MCC meet every 1st & 3rd Wednesday at Hope View Farm, Astley M29 7LH

Hell's Belles WMC meet last Monday of the month at the Cauldron, Radcliffe

Phoenix Rising MCC meet 1st Sunday of the month at 3pm Tempest Arms, Chorley Old Rd, Bolton

Coyote MCC – meet every Tuesday Old Cock Inn Oldham Rd Middleton M24 2EB

Pist'N'Nuts MCC – meet every Thursday 8pm @ Gun Inn, Hollingworth

The Sisterhood – meet first Tuesday of month @ 7pm at The Cart & Horses, Astley M29 7SD

Millennium 2000BC meet at Broadfield Arms, Leyland, every other Monday

Shieldmaidenz MCC meet at the old Lionhearts clubhouse Platt Bridge, timings TBC

Road Kill MCC meet at the Veterans' Garage, Irlam every Monday evening about 6pm.

Rally Rebels RC meet at the Cock & Rabbit, Manchester Rd, Southport every other Sunday 3-5pm

Known upcoming events

29th September – North Manchester Custom & Classic Bike Show Ramsbottom Cricket Club, Acres Lane, Ramsbottom BL0 0BS

5th Oct – Avernus MCC Rock Night – Red Herring Mill Lane Coppull PR7 5AN. Rally tickets on sale.

19th October – RDMC Manchester – 1st Anniversary Party at the clubhouse

26th October – Blackpool MAG Halloween Rock Night (featuring Rupert Fabulous) Waterloo Music Bar, Waterloo Road, Blackpool FY4 2AF. Donations on the door.

26th October – Accrington MCC Rock Night – Poplar Club, Accrington

2nd November – Phoenix Rising MCC Birthday Party at the Tempest Arms, Bolton

2nd November – Big Gaz's Memorial Ride from the RDMC Manchester clubhouse

3rd November - Hell's Belles WMC Samhain Night at the Cauldron Radcliffe M26 2TA

9th November – Millennium 2000BC Rock Night @ the Canberra Club, Salmsbury with free camping

15th February 2020 – British Bulldogs MCC Valentine Rock Night at the Balcarres Arms

22nd February 2020 – Millennium 2000BC 20th Birthday Bash, Canberra Club, Salmsbury

14-16th August 2020 – Avernus MCC Underworld Rally – Park House Barn, Milnthorpe LA7 7EB.

As ever, if you would like to have your say on anything vaguely MAG-related, or sell something bike related, just drop me a line at billgreen@madasafish.com and I'll put it into the newsletter next month.

Bill

NW Political Rep

*Der
Kommissar*



Not to be outdone, Yamaha is aiming to bring self-driving technology to motorcycles. Oh joy.

"SHAKE, RATTLE 'N' ROLL!"



Saturday 26th October

The Waterloo Music Bar, Waterloo Rd, Blackpool FY4 2AF

RUPERT FABULOUS

HALLOWEEN HOOTENANNY

Donations on the Door
In Aid of the Motorcycle Action Group

WARRINGTON WHEELS

10TH ANNIVERSARY SHOW!

UNDER 18'S BIKE BUILDING COMPETITION

22nd MAY 2020 11am - 2pm

BUILD A BIKE RELATED VEHICLE, RUNNING OR NOT, AND BRING IT ALONG TO THE ONE DAY SHOW. BUILD ALONE, WITH FRIENDS OR GET A TEAM TOGETHER FROM YOUR SCHOOL, COLLEGE OR YOUTH CLUB. IT'S COMPLETELY FREE TO ENTER!



TO BE HELD AT CHAIGELEY SCHOOL, 6 LYMM RD, WARRINGTON WA4 2TE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT BOB TOWLER

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