

I'll share a fact with you – November is the worst month. The nights are drawing in, the weather's getting grimmer and there's little to look forward to. At least December's got Christmas (alright, November's got Bonfire Night but I don't enjoy that as much as I used to, not being 8 years old any more). January and February may be colder but at least you've got the consolation of the days getting longer and there being light at the end of the tunnel. No, November is when you can't pretend that ideal biking weather isn't over yet.

I know quite a few bikers who've laid up their bikes for the winter by now before the dreaded salt appears. I don't, but I'm definitely "more selective" about how often I ride. Yet, such is the British climate, we get many days in winter that are better than what passes for summer. SORN the bike and you'll miss them. So, stop worrying and rust in peace?

Last Month – MAG NW Demo Ride – Saturday 25th October

The morning started none too promising for me, with a chill breeze and a threat of rain in the (d)Ribble Valley. I must confess that I wondered how big a turnout we would get for the NW Demo Ride, but I needn't have worried.

Events such as this rely on numbers for impact – and we definitely got the numbers. Bikes were arriving as I reached the Henry Boddington and by the time of the off were looking a pretty impressive bunch.



The numbers start to build!

The apparatchiks of Salford Council will realise that for every biker who rode on the demo that day there will be another dozen out there who agree with us but couldn't make the run. That's quite a show of opposition to their hare-brained ideas. I'm quite sure they think that they've come up with an idea that makes themselves look innovative and forward-thinking whilst boosting their "green credentials". The fact that even the cycle lobby opposes the schemes gives the lie to that. We've got to just keep plugging away until it sinks in at the Town Hall. A massive thanks to all who supported the ride – you made a difference!



Salford Rep Blayz rallies the troops before the off.



Lembit was there to ride with us.

This month – Ring of Red M60 – Sunday 9th November



This was not a MAG event but I think I spotted half the MAG members in the North-West at Birch Services in the meet up before the run. For those of you who missed it, the idea was to wear something red and then ride the full circuit of the M60, thereby creating the world's largest poppy! I haven't got a clue how it appeared from space but it looked pretty damn good to me from the road.

Once we cleared the traffic and reached some open stretches, the sight of a motorway full of bikers in red was certainly memorable. Another excellent turn-out

by NW bikers and hopefully a shed load of money raised for ex-service personel.

MAG in the media - Sunday Times 16th November

Spotted last week in the **Sunday Times Driving section**. In amongst the the reviews of family saloons and Clarkson's usual bollocks they often bury a bike test ride. Last week's (quoted below) was a cracker, as it highlighted the problems now facing young riders.

“C'mon, you young daredevils, leap through those Brussels hoops - Teenage bikers are being put off riding by knotty EU rules. But the Yamaha MT-125 will give them a big thrill..

LOOK at this, young fella . . . it's the Yamaha MT-125, the coolest thing on two wheels, right? Coolest thing you can ride, anyway, being a teenager with an A1 licence and all. Such style, such stonking performance, and it corners like a jackrabbit. How can you resist?

Well, resist they do — and wholesale. Entry-level bikes have never been better but youngsters are turning away from them in catastrophic numbers. According to figures from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency for 2012-13, 3,294 riders aged 16 and 17 took the practical test; in 2013-14 it was 353. That's a drop of almost 90%. For 18-year-olds during the same two periods the numbers are even more frightening — down from 2,787 to 151. The 19-year-olds, who are allowed to ride bigger A2 bikes, fared better year on year with a drop of only 46% to 1,377 tests.

At the same time, says the Motorcycle Action Group, fatal accident rates are starting to increase, which could be the result of young riders remaining learners rather than taking expensive three-day training courses and jumping through the new licensing hoops from Brussels – the compulsory basic training, the theory test, the practical test modules 1 and 2 – only to find they are still limited to 125cc bikes until they grow up.

When the teenage car driver can buy an old banger for the price of a good crash helmet and bomb off down the road with minimal fuss, it doesn't augur well for the future of biking.

The fact that some of today's 125s are the best entry-level proper bikes yet offered to the British public is immaterial if the regulators have made qualifying to ride one so onerous and bewildering that the market is on its uppers.”

What followed was a fantastic review of the MT-125, the sort of bike I would have killed for when I was 17. But back then I knew that all that stood between me and that beautiful green and black Z1 was one simple test (plus a couple of grand I didn't have, of course). Perhaps it was a bit too easy then. Now, however, it has become ridiculous. A suspicious man might think that the bike-hating



eurocrats in Brussels were trying to kill off motorcycles totally by the back door, knowing the storm that attempting to impose an outright ban would raise. It's nice to see MAG's message is getting picked up by the mainstream media though – it can only help gather support for a more rational approach to training and testing. What are your thoughts? Answers on a postcard please.

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 at **British Bulldogs MCC, at the Castle on th'Hill pub, Hindley WN2 4BW on Wednesday 26th November at 8pm**

Here is the latest, up to date list of biker events which the Alliance has put together, which includes a few changes from last month.

Regular monthly events

HAMC Open night last Saturday of month, open 7.30 'til late

Mid-Life Crisis Meet'n'greet, BBQ - last Wednesday of each month, Ship Inn Irlam M44 6AJ – finished now until next spring, might be a rock night upstairs

Sutton Rockers Band Night, 1st Saturday of each month.

Black Diamonds open night every Friday at the clubhouse in Hindley

Last Friday of each Month - Open Night, Ribble Valley Chop Club

1st and 3rd Friday every month – Born of Chaos MCC meeting everyone welcome - Warrington WA4 6RS

1st and 3rd Tuesday every month – Brickies Bike Club meeting everyone welcome - Atherton, M46 0QA

1st Wednesday April → Sept – Rising Moon MCC Ride In, Hyde – over now until next spring

Salford MAG meeting 8pm Last Thursday every month, Duke of York, Church St, Eccles

Rogue Riders meeting every Thursday – The clubhouse Statham WA13 9BT

Known upcoming events –

22nd Nov – Avernus MCC Anti-Christmas Party at the Minstrel pub Chorley (limited camping)

22nd Nov – Cogheads MCC Frightmare Before Xmas Rocknight

30th Nov – Vesparados SC Charity Run

6th Dec – Two Wheels in Unison

7th Dec – Roughley's Toy Run Practice

7th Dec – Full Throttle 2nd Xmas Bike Show

12th Dec – MT Heads SantaStock

13th Dec – Furness MAG Xmas Party

8th Feb – NW Fred Hill Run, Charles Napier, Blackburn

22nd Feb – NW MAG AGM, Duke of York, Eccles. Starts at 1pm.

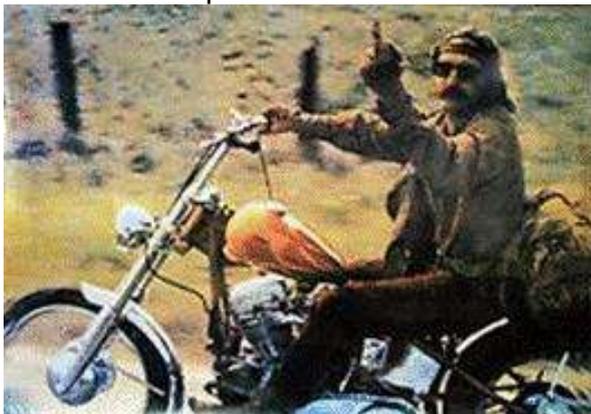
28th Feb – Avernus MCC Underground Rock Night

26-28th June – Blackpool Area MAG 18th Rally, Fleetwood RUFC

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



Let us continue to communicate a reasoned yet polite opposition to those who would destroy biking.

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Events

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