



Farewell to 2014 – onwards and upwards in 2015!

It's been a busy year for NW MAG, getting out and about whenever possible to spread the word and gather support. At times it must have seemed that you couldn't get away from us! In April the region hosted a fairly fraught National AGM amidst some dire predictions for MAG's future - all of which, thankfully, have failed to come true. Nor will they.

Those of us who love biking are surrounded by those who would kill it off by a thousand cuts. Biking today needs MAG more than ever but there are enough of us out there who will make sure that MAG not only survives but prospers. So, looking ahead to 2015, what's to be done? MAG always needs activists. If you can spare the time next year then pop down to your nearest branch meeting, or just get in touch. Any help, no matter how little, is much appreciated. However, we realise that many of us lead busy lives and are too heavily committed elsewhere – you still help MAG enormously with your continued membership (I renew mine on standing order now so that I don't forget!). If your club isn't already affiliated, could you push for it at your next meeting? Most of all, thanks for all your support and hard work this year and have yourself a great Xmas and 2015!



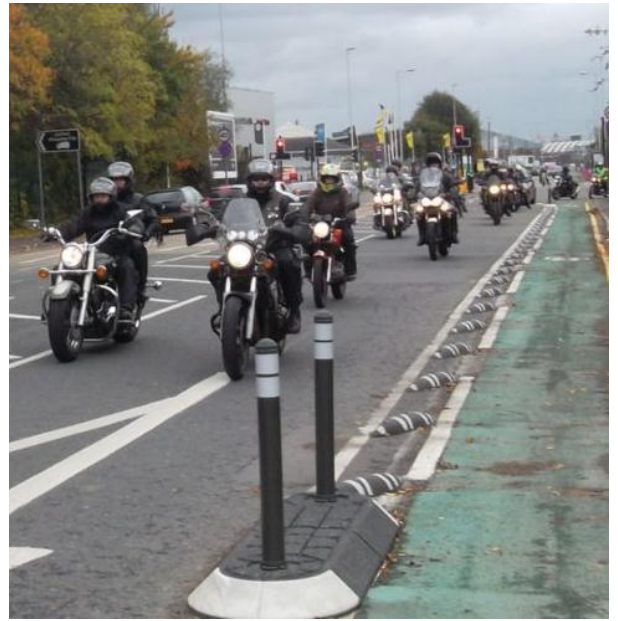
Armadillo Armageddon – Salford starts listening

After our successful demo ride in October it looks like Salford City Council are now more willing to hear our side of the argument. On 1st December Salford MAG activists Steve (Blayz) Blay, Mike Yarwood and Owen Morris met with Lee Evans of Transport Planning and Sally Fletcher of “Urban Vision”. Councillor Roger Jones (Labour) was down to attend but gave apologies.

Who exactly are “Urban Vision”, I hear you ask, and what has it got to do with them? They are, in their own words, *“a multidisciplinary service organisation within the property development and regeneration sector; delivering services from pre-application planning advice through to design, comprehensive project management and scheme delivery”*. So, that’s cleared that up then! Basically, Salford City Council (in keeping with all local government nowadays)

outsources projects such as cycle lanes to private sector groups like them. And large demo rides are not the sort of PR they like.

The MAG lads spelt out all our concerns clearly regarding the risks to motorcyclists that armadillos pose. However, it soon became apparent that the council reps had no experience of motorcycling nor had they any insight into how motorcyclists have to ride and position themselves in the road. So, the Salford MAG team explained it all patiently to them, even volunteering to take them for a “backie” so that they could discover it for themselves!



Other important points were addressed concerning how much the lanes would actually be used:

- would the cycle lanes be compulsory or just advisory for cyclists?
- how would the lanes be kept clean and free from road debris? No cyclist in their right mind is going to use them if they’re full of old tyres and broken glass.
- would the lanes be wide enough for cyclists to overtake each other?

With regard to Irlam o’th Heights the council reps promised that there are no plans to build a Bedford-style “Turbo” roundabout but simply to slightly widen the footpaths to allow cyclists to share the pavement

rather than having to use the road. This may not be ideal but it’s a lot better than what we could have been landed with! The subject of bikes in bus lanes was again pushed, with a concession gained that it was a possibility for the future, albeit not the near future but after the issue of an elected Mayor for Manchester is resolved.

No agreement was reached on the day but each side gained a clearer understanding of the other’s viewpoint and the groundwork was laid for future progress. Sally Fletcher will also look into the lack of feedback received from the council after the consultation process.

So, a big thanks to Salford MAG and all those who turned out for the demo ride. We’re now a step further down the road to achieving a sensible resolution, which shows what peaceful protest and tireless campaigning can achieve.

Next month – Ultimate Custom Show, Manchester Central – 10th & 11th January 2015

The Bike Show at Manchester Central (aka G-Mex) is no more. Those of you who laid out your hard-earned to attend for the last couple of years are unlikely to mourn it too much. Despite the best efforts of the organisers the range of bikes on display was decidedly underwhelming and, unless you were just after a cheap helmet or leathers, not worth the pricey entrance fee. So, goodbye Bike Show, hello **Ultimate Custom Show**. This won't be a bike-only event but will also include custom cars, trucks etc. We can't comment on how good it'll be but it sounds like it could be OK.



The stars of the show are to be “**Lizard Lick Towing**”, which I'm told is something off the telly (probably the porn channels by the sound of it). The NW MAG stand will be there all weekend so make sure you stick your head in to say hello if you're there too.

It's book time! Motorcycle book reviews by long time NW MAG member Bob Berwick

It's Christmas and those who have received gifts like old fashioned Book Tokens or maybe a Kindle could well be thinking about what motorcycle books to read over the winter. Well if it's a motorcycle travel book your choice is very large, but the motorcycle travel book to put most others in the shade is Ted Simon's "**Jupiter's Travels**", first printed back in the 1970's and reprinted many a time since. It is his story of a four year, 63,000 mile trip around 54 countries on a Triumph, this book has inspired so many others to 'get up and go'. A classic book indeed, Ted Simon was himself inspired by a book called "**One Man Caravan**", a book about Robert Fulton's 1932/33 solo around the world trip, which I will get round to reading someday.

Ted Simon wrote a follow up book to Jupiter's Travels called '**Riding High**' where he looks back again at his 4 year journey, this time putting in some stories that there was no room for in the original book, but somehow this book is a bit sad in places as he keeps asking himself "why did I do it?" and "has it changed me to someone I don't know?" but as the writing continues he seems to settle down and seems to accept that there were more good things to come out of 'The journey' than bad.

Years later he re-ran the journey but this time on a modern bike, a BMW, with a lot of modern aids like a computer! Again a book I have but not yet read. He also wrote "**The Gypsy in Me**", a look back at a very long walk he did late in life, from the UK to Romania no less! No motorcycles involved this time but still a good book, I read it before I attended a bike rally in Poland and it did help me to understand the Polish nation a lot better.

One very under-rated motorcycle book is "**Running With The Moon**" by Jonny Bealby, a book which starts off on a very sad note as his fiancé dies whilst they are travelling in Kashmir, he was 26 at the time and Melanie was a year or so younger. His recovery from his deep pain and grief gives an inspiring read, a book I will read again soon.

Also a book about African travels is '**Into Africa**' by Sam Manicom. This book I found hard to read. I know people who love all of Sam's books, but it just did not pull me into the ride.

There are lots of other motorcycle travel books which I just find hard work, like '**Full Circle**' by Richard and Mopsa English from the late 1980's which reads to me like a bus timetable with no real heart, and then there are those by Ian Mutch. I have two, "**Looking For America**" and "**Riding With The Beast**". The latter is the better of the two once you have worked out just who 'The Beast' is. Good books to slip into your panniers whilst going on a biking holiday,

The McGregor and Boorman books, "**The Long Way Round**" etc., often turn up cheap at charity

shops now and again and I have a few of them, none yet read by me.

Robert M Pirsig's "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance" from 1974, been reprinted many a time, not a lot of information about either Zen or indeed motorcycles, and it is a very heavy book (and I do not mean by weight). It gets way beyond me in the second half of the book, I first tried to read it back in the late 1970's but got no more than near halfway, I picked up a near new reprinted copy this year and bit by bit I am making my way deep into it, not a book you can read in one night, but it ain't going to beat me, I will finish it one day. (*Took me 25 years! – Bill*)

The most inspiring book I have is "**Touching The World**" by Cathy Birchall and Bernard Smith. It is indeed an extraordinary tale as Cathy is blind and did not meet Bernard until she was in her early 40's. A short time later they do a 25,000 miles journey around the world! It is not a book you will want to put down. Cathy's writing puts you in the seat, her report, for example, about riding and staying in India sucks you into the book, as much as India sucked Cathy and Bernard into the land. There is so much in this book to take in, I am only halfway into the book at the moment but I would not lend it out to anyone, I don't want ever to lose it. The very sad thing is a few years after the book was printed Cathy died of cancer. I met Bernard at a motorcycle show some time later, very nice person.

The above is only a very small percent of the motorcycle travel writing market, there are hundreds of them so I hope you pick the good ones!! Bob B

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 **Mid Life Crisis MCC** at the **Ship Inn, Irlam M44 6AJ** on **Wednesday 28th January at 8pm**.

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 last month.

Regular monthly events

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

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

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

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

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

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

Known upcoming events –

14th Feb Black Diamonds Gazza's 60th Do – the Clubhouse, Hindley

28th Feb – Avernus MCC Underground Rock Night

28th Feb – Millennium Rocknight, Canberra Club.

Feb 2015 - Leyland Eagles Rock Night, Farrington Social Club

8th Feb 2015 - NW Fred Hill Run, Charles Napier, Blackburn leaving 1pm

22nd Feb 2015 -NW MAG AGM, Duke of York, Eccles. Starts at 1pm.

21-22nd March Event City Bike Show Manchester

March 2015 - But Why AVVA Laugh Rock night and Bike show

22nd May 2015 - Warrington Wheels Youth-bike - Grappenhall School, Warrington, entry forms available from Bob Towler 01925 263895 or E-mail bobtowler57@hotmail.co.uk

26-28th June 2015 - Blackpool Area MAG 18th Rally, Fleetwood RUFC

4-5th July 2015 MidLife Crisis MCC Bike show

10-12th July 2015 Millennium Caveman Bash Rally

10th Oct 2015 – MidLife Crisis MCC Birthday Bash



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

