



# North West Newsletter

February 2018

## 2018 off to a Flying Start!

As I write this the sun is shining and it feels like a beautiful spring day. I've been out on the bike (the Honda Cub admittedly) and my spirits feel decidedly elevated. However, according to the weather forecast, by the time you read this you'll be under several inches of snow. Oh joy. I've been told that statistically we're more likely to get a White Easter than a White Christmas. MAG of course has been beavering away regardless, both nationally and in the North West, and still relies on the continued support of members such as your good self. So, if your membership is up soon please don't forget to renew. And next time we send out the newsletter it'll be officially spring – let's hope that snow is gone.

## This month – Fred Hill Run 11<sup>th</sup> Feb



A freezing cold Feb 11<sup>th</sup> saw MAG's hardy NW members attending our 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive Fred Hill Run (and the 32<sup>nd</sup> since he passed away in 1984!). Where does the time go? Fred Hill, and the annual runs in different parts of the country each year, typifies what MAG is about – belief, principle and yes, sheer bloody-minded determination. In his life Fred was at times a WW2 dispatch rider, a maths teacher and a one man campaign of civil disobedience. When the compulsory helmet law was introduced in 1973, Fred was outraged. He wasn't against helmets but what business was it of anyone else's whether he wore one or not? In protest, he rode everywhere wearing just an old beret on his head. When he refused to pay his fines, he was locked up no fewer than thirty one times. Some sentences were very short, as little as 24 hours. Others, however, were much longer and Fred found himself banged up amongst hardened criminals. Despite this, he stood by his beliefs and continued to ride lid-less. He was not a young man, and his final sentence of 60 days in London's Pentonville Prison, proved too much for him to take. He was seventy-four years old when, in 1984, he died from a heart attack whilst still in custody. The prison governor had warned him that the harsh prison environment could be the death of him, to which Fred replied that, *'it didn't matter where a man died but how.'*

It's now 34 years since Fred died. That year, 1984, Kawasaki designed my bike – the GTR1000. I bought it new in 2008. Its ten years old now and getting a bit long in the tooth so I've been thinking of replacing it with something more modern. I'm not sure what to get but I am sure that it'll be faster,

lighter and will handle and stop better. But it'll be basically the same type of machine only with 34 years more development, something that Fred himself would recognise. I'm also sure that in another 34 years, in 2052, bikes will not be a development of today's machines but will be utterly different. For a start, the newest internal combustion engine bike will be 12 years old, having been outlawed in 2040. What will replace them is still up in the air – Electric? Hydrogen fuel cell? Something as yet undreamt of? Now a lot of you may be thinking “*stop worrying, you won't be around so it won't be your problem*” and you're probably right. However Fred Hill was an old man and could have said the same about the helmet law but he made his stand not so much for himself but for all bikers, present and future. It's just one reason out of many why MAG is needed now perhaps more than ever. The world is changing fast and we need an effective voice if we're not to be side-lined out of existence.

So was Fred's campaign, and MAG's stance over the years since, ultimately a failure? I mean, the compulsory helmet law was not repealed and is still very much with us. No, I believe it was very much a success. Without that perpetual reminder to the government that we object to compulsion, what other intrusive laws would they felt entitled to foist on us since then? Helmets still remain the only mandatory item of clothing in the UK. That in itself is a victory.

## **This Month – NW MAG AGM – 11th Feb**

Considering the weather there was a cracking turnout for the annual AGM at the Petre Arms – plus a roaring fire to defrost the Fred Hill riders! The North-West region continues to campaign actively both on local and national issues affecting bikers as well as getting the stand out to as many bike events as possible – if you're out and about I'm sure you'll see us. The region also voted to support the Warrington Wheels Youth Motorcycle competition by again sponsoring a trophy this year. Yours truly will be going down on the day to help with the judging and presentations – and it's not too late to get your entry built if you haven't started yet!



## **Next Month – Manchester Bike Show 24<sup>th</sup>&25<sup>th</sup> March**

The Manchester Bike Show is back for a 7<sup>th</sup>(!) year and MAG will be there too. This year they say that there'll be over 100 trade exhibitors, and over 750 bikes on show. If you're there, why not drop by the stand and say hello? Tickets are £11.67 advanced and opening hours are from 9:30am-5:00pm.



## **Is removing Road tax good for bikers?**



The idea that Vehicle Excise Duty (road tax) has had its day seems to be gaining ground. Apart from declining returns as more zero-rated “green” vehicles appear on the roads, now changes to VED (introduced in April 2017) have prompted further calls for a change. Road tax has got a lot more complicated. Cars are split into 13 bands, ranging from zero emissions to those producing over 255g/km CO<sub>2</sub>. Under the new rules only vehicles that produce no emissions at all, such as electric, are free of tax. Previously, cars that emit less than 100g/km also didn't attract

any tax. A car emitting 99g/km bought before 1 April 2017 is free of road tax for life. Those bought after the date now cost £120 in the first year, and £140 a year thereafter.

It's the unfairness of the system, plus the fact that it doesn't achieve what it intends, that has attracted criticism. For example, the 5.0-litre V8 Ford Mustang coupe costs £36,345 and puts out CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 299g/km. Before last year's changes, it would have cost you £1,120 to tax in the first year and then £550 each year after that. Under the new system you'll pay £2,000 in the first year and £140 a year after that. After five years of ownership of this environmentalist's nightmare you'll be £760 better off!

So why is this of interest to bikers (apart from the fact that most bikers are also car owners, that is)? I recently wrote about arguments in favour of Road Pricing. Another solution being proposed by many commentators is to move the tax from the vehicle and onto fuel. The easiest way to do that is to hike the Fuel Duty; it's literally "you drive/ride more – you pay more". The idea is that Fuel Duty will be the daily tax nudge that will encourage people to think more carefully about using their vehicles but won't affect the appeal of electric or hydrogen-powered vehicles.

For bikers it would mean an instant saving of £85 a year for bikes above 600cc. However, petrol would go up. Latest figures from the RAC Foundation show that VED generated around £6bn in 2016 and according to the UK Petroleum Industry Association just under 45 billion litres of road fuels are sold in the UK each year. Crunching the numbers, replacing VED would add approximately 13.5p to the duty on a litre of petrol. If that is true simple maths also shows that if you use more than about 12 litres of fuel a week you'll end up paying more. Even for a sensible bike like the Honda ST1100 (returning about 40mpg) that allows about 5500 miles each year before you're out of pocket.

I've often moaned that the road tax on my missus's car is so much lower than my bike. I think I'll shut up in future.

## 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 **MT Heads MCC** at the **Flying Horse Hotel, 37 Packer St, Rochdale OL16 1NJ** at **8pm on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February**.

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** 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of month, open 7.30 'til late

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

**Black Diamonds open night** every Friday at the clubhouse in Hindley

**Allegiance MC Open Night** first Saturday of month at the clubhouse Aintree

**Hell's Belles WMC Open Night** last Monday of month at clubhouse Radcliffe – Everyone welcome - The Cauldron, Globe Industrial Estate, Derbyshire St, Radcliffe, M26 2TA

**Red Rose MAG** - meet every 1<sup>st</sup>&3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, Petre Arms, Langho nr Blackburn

**Ecclestone Delph Bike Meet** every Tuesday until end of season, café open till 9pm – **ended till the spring**

**MT Heads Meet** – Flying Horse Rochdale 8pm every Monday, donations to "Hounds for Heroes"

**Road Reapers MCC** - meet 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday 1pm & 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday at 7.30 at the Ellsmere Rd Rec Club, Bolton

**Brotherhood Quest Bike Nite** – every Monday (except last in month) 7-9pm Anchor pub, Liverpool Rd, Hutton PR4 5SL

**Bury the Hatchett MCC** - meet at the Two Tubs pub Bury at 7.30 third Thursday of month

**Ronin MCC** - meet every Thursday at the Greyhound pub, 44 Leigh Rd, Worsley M2 1LR - open night every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday

**Cogheads MCC** meet every Thursday (except 1<sup>st</sup>) at 8pm, Forts Arms, Clayton-le-Moors

**Road Slayers Brotherhood** meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday at Rock Hotel pub, Peel Green Rd, Barton M30 7AY

**Accrington MCC** meet at Poplar Club, Wellington St. Accrington every other Sunday at 8pm.

**Chorley Wildhartz MCC** – meet first Thursday of month at Seaview Inn, Preston Rd, Chorley – postponed til March

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

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

**Antagonist MCC** meet every Wednesday, 8pm Ring O'Bells, St Leonards Sq, Middleton M24 6DJ

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

**Leyland Eagles MCC** meet 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays at Leyland & Farrington Club

**Avernus MCC** – meet at the Red Herring, Coppull, please check [www.avernus-mcc.co.uk](http://www.avernus-mcc.co.uk) for dates

**RBLR** meet 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays at St.Chads Club, Whittle-le-Woods

**Life Behind Bars MCC** meet Thursdays at the Two Tubs, Bury

### Known upcoming events –

**10<sup>th</sup> March – Crisis Crew 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Party** – ticket only, live music, free food, fun and games – Ship Inn, Irlam

**16<sup>th</sup> March - Road Reaper's St. Patrick's Rock Night** for NW Blood Bikes - Ellesmere Club, Bolton £4 otd

**17<sup>th</sup> Feb – MT Heads MCC Valloween** – Ukrainian Club, Mere St. Rochdale OL11 1HJ

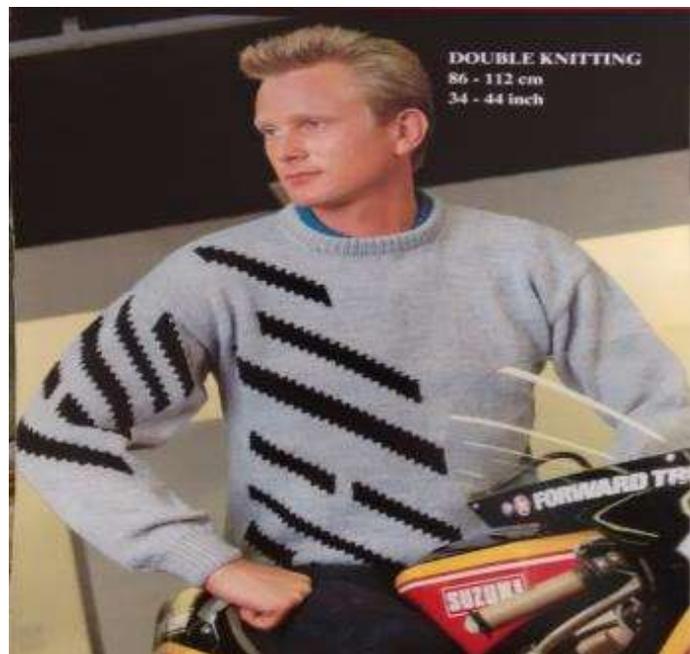
16-18<sup>th</sup> March Well Oiled MCC "Oil Ya Nuts" Rally – Adlington Cricket Club PR7 4HD, £12 otdg only, see Facebook  
 31<sup>st</sup> March - Avernus Rock Night at the Red Herring pub, Coppull, live band & DJ £3 otd  
 7<sup>th</sup> April 2018 – Rising Moon – Ashton Cricket club – One Nighter Party £5 per ticket, band and food  
 14<sup>th</sup> April – Hells Belles WMC Open Night at the Cauldron, Globe Industrial Estate, Darbyshire St, Radcliffe, M26 2TA  
 28<sup>th</sup> April 2018 – Red Rose MAG 2<sup>nd</sup> St.George's Rock Knight, Whittingham & Goosnargh Social Club  
 23<sup>rd</sup> June – Pop Club (with Accrington MCC & B.A.D. MCC) Childrens' Cancer Fundraiser  
 29<sup>th</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018 – Blackpool MAG 21<sup>st</sup> Seaside Rally, Fleetwood Rugby Club FY7 8AY  
 29<sup>th</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018 - HAMC Manchester Rally  
 27-29<sup>th</sup> July – MT Heads Runnin' on MT Rally – Panto 9 – Collop Gate Farm, Heywood  
 24-27<sup>th</sup> August 2018 Avernus Underworld Rally – Hamilton House Farm PR3 0TB, tickets £20 on sale 1<sup>st</sup> Feb  
 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> Oct 2018 - Rising Moon Rally – £12.00 per ticket bands food raffle etc

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@masdafish.com](mailto:billgreen@masdafish.com) and I'll put it into the newsletter next month.

Bill  
 NW Political Rep



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**Future Events Around the Region**

## 8th WARRINGTON WHEELS YOUTH MOTOR CYCLE COMPETITION 2018

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Presentation at 1.30 Bring a gazebo

ENTRANTS CAN BE TEAMS OR INDIVIDUALS AGED 18 YEARS OR UNDER, ENTER AS MANY VEHICLES AS YOU CAN BUILD. (Any type of bike, running or not)

ENTRANTS WILL ALSO BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENTER THEIR EXHIBITS IN THE NATIONAL YOUTHBIKE COMPETITION ([www.youthbike.com](http://www.youthbike.com)) HELD IN LINCOLNSHIRE JUNE 2018

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT BOB TOWLER  
C/O WOOLSTON BROOK SCHOOL, GREEN LANE, WARRINGTON,  
WA1 4JL 01925 818549

Or E-mail [bobtowler57@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:bobtowler57@hotmail.co.uk)  
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<b>SATURDAY</b> 28 <sup>TH</sup> APRIL	Whittingham & Goosnargh Social Club, Old Hospital Grounds, Whittingham, Preston PR3 2JE	<b>£5</b> ON THE DOOR
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**£20 OTG**  
Fleetwood Rugby Club, Melbourne Avenue, Lance. FY7 8AY

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