



Last month's national AGC proved to be a lively affair with plenty of forthright opinions, divergent views and honest debate. I really enjoyed it. That's how it should be in a democratic organisation that cares deeply about the future of biking. With the continued support of our members we'll hopefully be successful in keeping motorcycling vibrant in a rapidly changing world.

## **This Month – Blackpool MAG Halloween Hootenanny 26<sup>th</sup> Oct**



Big thanks to all who attended the Halloween Hootenanny last weekend – I'm sure you had a great time. You can also give yourself a slap on the back for supporting MAG's fight for riders' rights. Cheers!

## **Road charging latest**

It looks like road charging, where you pay by the mile you travel rather than a one-off annual road tax, could be moving one step closer. The idea is that these road tolls could plug a hole in the public finances caused by the increasing use of electric vehicles, MPs have said. The transport select committee said that a "national debate" on pay-as-you-go charging was needed because the £34.3 billion raised in fuel duty and vehicle excise duty would dwindle over the next two decades with a ban on new petrol and diesel vehicles due to be introduced by 2040.

The committee will open a formal inquiry into road pricing next year. The Institution of Civil Engineers has warned that fuel duty — levied at 57.95p per litre of petrol and diesel — would raise "significantly less" than at present as more people drove zero-emission cars. Fuel duty raised £27.9 billion in 2017-18 and vehicle excise duty, an annual charge based on carbon dioxide emissions, generated £6.4 billion. The taxes accounted for 1.6 per cent of national income last year compared with almost 2.7 per cent in 1999-00. The Treasury said that it was "an area of live policy development".

## **Electric Harley struggling**

They may have billed it as the future of motorcycling, but Harley-Davidson appears to be struggling to convince bikers to buy its new \$30,000 electric bike.

A survey of Harley-Davidson dealerships in the United States found salesmen were finding it difficult to convince younger customers to pay the premium price for the Livewire. Harley-Davidson sales have been weak in recent years and the \$5.4 billion company is trying to attract the younger crowd.



The Livewire has no gears and goes from nought to 60mph in 3sec, but its range between charges is only about 100 miles. Most Livewire orders were said to be from older riders. The price tag is more than four times that of an entry-level Harley-Davidson and just \$5,000 less than an entry-level Model 3, the all-electric family car made by Tesla.

It is estimated that Harley-Davidson will ship only between 400 and 1,600 LiveWires in the first year of sales. The company sold nearly 230,000 motorcycles worldwide last year.

The Livewire has been available to pre-order since January and the bikes are now being shipped to dealerships in North American and Western Europe. The bike starts at £29,000 in the UK.

## Driverless cars on UK streets now



Driverless cars are carrying passengers through the busy streets of south London for the next two months in the largest trial of its kind in Britain. Ford Mondeos adapted with sensors and self-driving technology from the British company Five AI are operating on public roads alongside other traffic in the boroughs of Croydon and Bromley until the end of next month. The vehicles are making several trips a day along a fixed 12-mile route. This is the biggest UK trial of driverless technology to date involving cars carrying

passengers in ordinary traffic. Grant Shapps, the transport secretary, hailed it as a “major step”. Passengers are not alone in the vehicles, as there is a safety driver who can take control in an emergency and a safety technician in the front passenger seat. Passengers, who will complete questionnaires before, during and after their ride, have been recruited by the insurer Direct Line, which is part of Streetwise, the consortium behind the trial. Mr Shapps said: *“The untapped potential of self-driving vehicle technology is huge — it could enhance road safety, tackle isolation, and create economic opportunities. The government’s [Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy](#) sets out how it is planning for the introduction of self-driving vehicles, and Streetwise’s successful trial will be a major step to rolling out the next phase of the UK’s transport revolution.”*

Autonomous vehicles have undergone trials more extensively in the US, where Waymo, a company providing taxi services, wrote to customers this month to say that it would soon be offering rides with no safety driver present.

Transport for London published guidelines this year on trials of self-driving cars, signalling its wish to promote them. Michael Hurwitz, director of innovation at TfL, said: *“Autonomous vehicle technology has the potential to significantly change travel and that’s why the mayor’s transport strategy commits us to engaging with innovative companies, both now and in the future, at the earliest available opportunity.”*

## Not-so-Smart Motorways (part 2)

The permanent removal of the hard shoulder on motorways should be scrapped in the face of escalating concerns from motorists, according to a report published today. The AA said that more than half of drivers backed the end of the “smart motorway” system in which the hard shoulder is used as an extra vehicle lane to increase road space. It was claimed in the report that only one in ten motorists felt safer under the new system. The AA called on Grant Shapps, the transport secretary, to hold a review of the system.



## The network

**788**

miles of smart motorway by April 2025



Highways England insists that casualty rates on smart motorways are 25 per cent lower than on those with old-fashioned hard shoulders. Under the system, emergency refuge areas are built up to 1.5 miles apart to allow vehicles to pull off the road. Differing speed limits are imposed to regulate traffic and lanes are closed with a red X on a gantry if a vehicle has broken down in the road ahead. The hard shoulder has been permanently removed on 13 stretches of road, including parts of the M1, M3, M5, M6 and M25, with another eight in development. Seven parts of the network have a “dynamic” hard shoulder that can be used at busy times. By April the smart motorway network will cover 488 miles — 244 miles in each direction. An additional 300 miles is planned by 2025. Dozens of drivers break down and are left stranded each day in fast-moving lanes of “smart” motorways that have no hard shoulders. Research by Highways England has shown that 19,316 vehicles stopped in flowing traffic on motorway “live lanes” in 2017 and last year, equivalent to more than 26 a day. In another 28,547 breakdowns drivers were able to make it from the smart motorway lanes to an emergency lay-by, verge or hatched area near a junction.

The AA surveyed more than 15,000 of its members online. It said that only 10 per cent felt safer on “all-lane running” stretches — those where there is permanently no hard shoulder — compared with conventional motorways. There were also concerns over the spacing between lay-bys, with only 16 per cent believing that 1.5 miles was a suitable distance. It was down from 23 per cent when the survey was last carried out, in February 2016. It found that 52 per cent of motorists believed that “construction of all-lane running motorways should be stopped”.

Edmund King, the president of the AA, said: *“Our new study shows that public trust on removing the hard shoulder has pretty much evaporated. Before any further schemes begin, we need an urgent and independent review into the safety of existing schemes.”*

Highways England said it was reducing the spacing between lay-bys on new smart motorways to one mile and introducing radar detection to spot broken-down vehicles more quickly. A spokeswoman said that smart motorways had more features and were *“significantly safer for drivers than other roads”*.

Last weekend the area coroner for Birmingham and Solihull warned that there was a risk to life from the removal of the hard shoulder. Emma Brown made her comments after the death of Dev Naran, eight, who was killed on a stretch of smart motorway on the M6 in May last year when a car driven by his grandfather stopped on the inside lane with no hard shoulder. It was hit by a truck being driven at about 56mph, killing the child instantly. In March Derek Jacobs, 83, was killed when his car was hit after it stopped on a smart motorway section of the M1 in Derbyshire. Six months earlier a woman was killed on the same stretch of road. Highways officials will push ahead with the extension of smart motorways despite concerns that their lack of a hard shoulder puts lives at risk.

Jim O'Sullivan, the chief executive of Highways England, said that the network would continue to be developed at its present rate over the next five years, adding more than 300 miles. He stated that reckless actions by drivers, including stopping on "live" vehicle lanes without good reason, was one of the main causes of crashes on motorways, not the design of the road. He cited examples of motorists stopping in the middle of the motorway to exchange contact details after a minor shunt or pulling to the side to check directions. Mr O'Sullivan said that England's high-speed roads were among the safest in the world and that there was a "disproportionate" focus on the risk posed by smart motorways. He pointed to figures showing that 77 people were killed on traditional motorways with a hard shoulder last year compared with nine on the smart network.

Smart motorways have been developed to cut congestion. They have refuge areas up to 1.5 miles apart, differential speed limits and gantries that display red Xs to close lanes if vehicles break down. Distances between refuges will be cut to a mile on motorways built from next year. Mr O'Sullivan rejected calls to pause the extension of the programme and to retrofit existing smart motorways with extra emergency areas. Additional lay-bys would cost £1 million each and would not improve safety, he said. *"We know they are safe but we are struggling to convince people of that. When you lay all the numbers out and you see the benefits that they bring and you see that they are safer than conventional motorways, it is very easy to commit to a successful programme."* He added that organisations such as the AA had a duty to communicate safe motorway driving more clearly.

Edmund King, president of the AA, said: *"It's ludicrous to suggest that having more lay-bys won't improve safety . . . if drivers have more places to pull off the motorway that's going to make the whole thing a lot safer."*

If they think breaking down on a "smart" motorway in a car is worrying, try it on a bike.

## 20mph limits alone don't work

Cutting the speed limit to 20mph reduces crashes and saves lives only if it is introduced alongside [road humps](#) or chicanes, a study has found. Simply putting up [20mph signs](#) does not appear to make roads safer because many drivers ignore them, the research suggests.

Many towns and cities have cut the speed limit to 20mph on residential streets, including London, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Leeds, Glasgow, Brighton, Liverpool, Nottingham and Southampton. Research commissioned by the Department for Transport and published last year found little evidence of safety benefits on roads with 20mph signs. The new research, led by Queen's University Belfast (QUB), included a review of nine studies of 20mph zones where traffic calming measures had been used to reduce speed. The researchers found these zones reduced collisions by up to 41 per cent and cut casualties, including slight, serious and fatal injuries, by up to 46 per cent.

Edmund King, president of the AA, said that imposing a 20mph speed limit was most effective where *"drivers can easily understand why the limit is set, for example, [because of] a school or playing fields. Targeted 20mph limits tend to be more effective than blanket limits. We need more variable speed limits linked to time of day. For example, in the US, most drivers slow down outside schools with flashing yellow lights, but not at 3am when there are no children around. The previous research suggests blanket 20mph zones dilute the speed limit's effectiveness and compliance."*

## 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 **Coyote MCC** at the **Old Cock Inn Middleton M24 2EB** at **8pm** on **Wednesday 27th November 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** 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of month, open 7.30 'til late

**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 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday 1pm & 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 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 RAFA Club  
**Avernus MCC** – meet at the Red Herring, Mill Lane Coppull PR7 5AN every other Friday  
**RBLR** meet 2<sup>nd</sup> 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** 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> November** – Phoenix Rising MCC Birthday Party at the Tempest Arms, Bolton  
**2<sup>nd</sup> November** – Big Gaz's Memorial Ride from the RDMC Manchester clubhouse  
**3<sup>rd</sup> November** - Hell's Belles WMC Samhain Night at the Cauldron Radcliffe M26 2TA  
**9<sup>th</sup> November** – Millennium 2000BC Rock Night @ the Canberra Club, Salmesbury with free camping  
**16<sup>th</sup> November** – HAMC Liverpool Armed Forces Veterans Fundraiser – Cotton St Liverpool from 8pm  
**15<sup>th</sup> February 2020** – British Bulldogs MCC Valentine Rock Night at the Balcarres Arms  
**22<sup>nd</sup> February 2020** – Millennium 2000BC 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday Bash, Canberra Club, Salmesbury  
**14-16<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:billgreen@madasafish.com) and I'll put it into the newsletter next month.

Bill

NW Political Rep





# 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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[bobsbikeclasses.co.uk](http://bobsbikeclasses.co.uk)

