



Welcome to the first NW newsletter of a new decade. Biking faces some big challenges and goodness knows where we will be in 2030. Ten years ago we were just getting used to the 2nd European Driving Licence Directive which, amongst other hoops to jump through, introduced the notorious 31mph “swerve test”. Predictably, numbers taking the test plummeted. Bikes then were seen as a menace which needed to be tamed. Fast forward to 2020 and bikes are now seen (mainly due to the efforts of MAG) more as a potential solution to congestion and pollution. We have now to build on the good work of the past decade and consolidate the future of biking in this country. Together we can do it.

Next Month – NW Fred Hill Run 9th February



Nearly time for North West MAG to hold its 16th consecutive **Fred Hill Run**, when we come together in proud remembrance of one of our original brave campaigners. Sadly our venue for the last five years, the Petre Arms in Langho, is now standing empty, as are so many other grand little pubs. So we’re going somewhere new: **The White Bull on the A59 in Gisburn BB7 4HE**. We’ll be arriving from noon onwards, ready to leave for our new “ceremony site” at **1pm**. It’ll be good to see you all and Bishop Michael has kindly said he will officiate again. You’ll be able to get a brew and a butty when you arrive – all we need now is decent weather!

Next Month – NW MAG AGM – 9th February

MAG is a democratic organisation, run by its members. Now it’s that time of year when you can have your say on how it is run and who should represent your views. We have decided to again run the Fred Hill Run and NW AGM back to back at the **White Bull** (see above). The plan is to leave on the run at 1pm before returning to the pub for the AGM at **2.30pm**. The AGM should be over by 4.30pm. Members who can’t make the Fred Hill Run but want to attend the AGM can simply get to the pub by 2.30pm. We have exclusive use of a large function room and there will be a range of excellent meals including traditional Sunday lunch at a discount for attendees. Remember to bring your membership card to vote!

Fewer lay-bys on smart motorways to save cash

The smart motorway programme has faced fresh criticism after it emerged that the number of emergency lay-bys was reduced to cut costs. Government documents state that “rationalising” refuge areas on motorways without a hard shoulder would ensure “savings” on the project. However, Department for Transport officials questioned whether greater spacing between lay-bys could lead to a corporate manslaughter charge if a motorist were killed.

Grant Shapps, the transport secretary, is preparing to publish the findings of a review into smart motorways amid concerns that they are unsafe. Under the project, hard shoulders have been removed on 13 stretches of “all-lane running” smart motorways, including parts of the M1, M3, M5, M6 and M25. A further eight motorways are in development. Seven parts of the network have a “dynamic” hard shoulder,

to be used as a lane at busy times. Lanes are closed with an X on a gantry if a vehicle ahead has broken down. Refuge areas are up to 1.5 miles apart to let cars to pull off in an emergency.

The project has been criticised after a series of deaths involving vehicles unable to reach a lay-by. Nine people were killed on smart motorways in 2018. Highways England, which operates the network, insists that the system is safe, with casualty rates 25 per cent lower than on traditional stretches of motorway with a hard shoulder. Motoring groups, however, have criticised a decision made in 2012 to extend the distances between emergency lay-bys. The original smart motorway prototype on the M42 had refuge areas 800 metres apart.

In a June, 2012, document the Highways Agency, which became Highways England, said: *“By rationalising refuge areas and locating these where the lowest cost solution is legitimised, savings can be made on a significant item of capital infrastructure.”*

The report said the design “proposes further ‘stretching’ their provision in order to provide an efficient and cost effective solution that remains able to achieve the required level of safety”.

Another document told of a meeting in May, 2011, between Highways Agency and department officials in which a government lawyer queried whether *“corporate manslaughter had been considered as part of the design and the potential liability of the agency if a road user was killed due to operation of the network”*.

The agency said that a study using a simulator had provided “a level of confidence” that the extra spacing was safe. Mr Shapps is expected to demand changes, including more lay-bys to let motorists pull off the motorway if their car develops a fault. He will also call for a roll-out of radar technology that can automatically alert highways officers when a vehicle breaks down in a “live” lane.

A Highways England spokesman said: *“The transport secretary has asked the Department for Transport to carry out, at pace, evidence stocks take to gather the facts about smart motorway safety. We are committed to safety and are supporting the department in its work on this.”*

So that’s alright then.

Vision Zero in Norway

The last time Norway had a year in which no children died on its roads, steam-powered vehicles plied the streets and Roald Amundsen had yet to reach the South Pole. It was 1910. For the first time in more than a century, the country is celebrating 12 months without an under-16 losing their life in a traffic accident. In Oslo, the capital, not a single child, pedestrian or cyclist was killed by a car. Throughout 2019 there was only one road death in the city, when a driver crashed his car into the barrier at a railway station near the city centre. The safer streets are a consequence of Oslo’s Vision Zero programme, under which it bought self-driving electric buses, tightened speed limits, laid countless sleeping policemen and banned private cars from some quarters. The governing mayor, Raymond Johansen, has said that it is conceivable that deaths from road accidents could be all but eliminated from well-managed cities. *“When one person is killed in traffic, it is one too many,”* he said. *“This puts us closer to our vision of zero traffic deaths.”*

This brings a chill to many bikers. No-one wants to see anyone killed or injured but inherently risky forms of transport, such as motorcycles, are anathema to the vision zero concept. So how are bikers faring in Norway? The answer, surprisingly, is not too bad.

Norwegian motorcyclists have through their own organisation, the NMCU, which has fought resolutely for their rights over the years.

As a results of their endeavours:

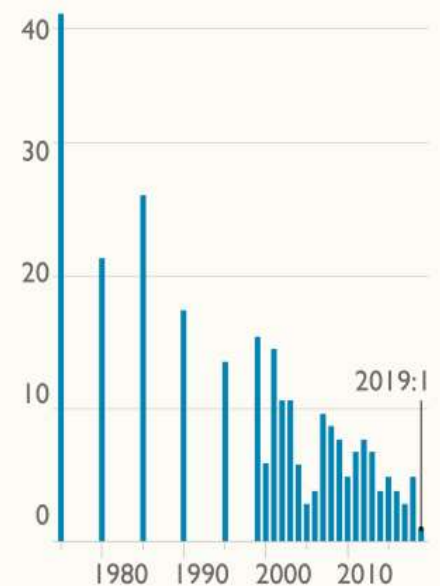
- Bikes can filter in traffic queues.
- Bikes are exempt from road tolls.
- Bikes are allowed to ride in the bus lane.
- Bikes are for the most part exempt from bridge and tunnel tolls
- Bikes have free parking in designated areas.

And as a bonus, automatic speed cameras do not recognize bikes.

The NMCU have long argued that if travellers cannot use public transport, it is good for traffic that they use two-wheelers instead of congestion-creating cars. And as bikers are “soft” road users, they need extra protection, e.g. allowing the use of bus lanes. By and large, these arguments have been accepted.

It all goes to show what an effective bikers’ lobby group can achieve!

Road deaths in Oslo



Source: Norwegian Highways Authority

The Vision Zero concept, which arose in Sweden during the mid-1990s, is based on two ideas: it is possible and morally imperative to eradicate deaths on the roads, and while accidents are caused by individuals they are often the result of faulty systems. The approach has spread to British cities such as Blackpool, Edinburgh and Bristol. However, nowhere has it been applied quite so effectively as in Norway. Three years ago in Oslo, which has a population of about 675,000, Mr Johansen's centre-left administration erased all 650 car parking spaces from streets in the centre. In 2018 it barred private vehicles from some streets and around primary schools and added 40 miles of bicycle lanes. It is experimenting with driverless buses.

Norway has the safest roads of any sizeable country in the world, according to a report last month by the International Transport Forum. The death rate has nearly halved over the past decade from 208 in 2010 to 110 last year. The principles of road safety are drilled into children from kindergarten. The traffic police are some of the best funded in Europe. Would-be drivers have to take four days of "elementary traffic class", including training in first aid, before they can take their first driving lesson.

"There has been a focus on individual traffic behaviour for a long time in Norway," Christoffer Solstad Steen, of the road safety charity Trygg Traffikk, said. *"There is an understanding that we are all responsible for our actions and if you don't follow common sense, for example by driving intoxicated, way too fast, without a seatbelt, [or] using a phone . . . the consequences are huge."*

Headlights a less than dazzling success



Carmakers should be forced to dim headlights on new vehicles amid concerns that rising numbers of other road users are being temporarily blinded by oncoming traffic, ministers have been told. Research has shown that more than nine out of ten road users believe car headlights are too bright. Some 54 per cent of motorists questioned said that the problem of headlight glare had worsened in the past 12 months. The increase is believed to be partly driven by the rising use of brighter xenon headlamps or LEDs as an alternative to traditional halogen bulbs.

Also the rising popularity of SUVs, which are typically higher on the road than other cars, increasing the possibility of lights shining directly into the eyes of oncoming drivers. According to the latest figures from the Department for Transport, there were 315 accidents caused by "dazzling headlights" in 2017. Of those, 71 were serious and six resulted in a fatality. The figure was up from 283 a year earlier.

Rod Dennis, a spokesman for the RAC, said: *"The dazzling effect of another driver's headlights isn't just uncomfortable. In some cases it can be nothing short of dangerous, making us lose sight of the road for a short time. It's concerning to see that a greater proportion of drivers have reported problems with glare this year than last year. All headlights have to meet specific international standards, which motorists might be surprised to discover haven't been updated since the 1960s, and so do not take specific account of newer technologies."*

Figures from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency show that 6 per cent of cars over three years old failed their MOT last year for problems associated with headlights.

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 **Union Riders MCC** at the **Malaga Drift, 1 Church Street, Salford M30 0DL at 8pm on Wednesday 29th January 2020. Please check the NW Alliance FB page for any last minute 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

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
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 @ The Pear Tree, 431 Hadfield Rd, Hadfield SK13 1PY
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 clubhouse, 198 Liverpool Rd, M44 5DB TBA
Road Kill MCC meet at the clubhouse, Unit 10, M44 5AZ, Irlam every Monday evening about 6pm.
Rally Rebels RC meet at the Cock & Rabbit, Manchester Rd, Southport every other Sunday 3-5pm
Antagonist MCC meet every Wednesday at the Church Inn, Chadderton OL1 2RR
Union Riders MCC meets at the Malaga Drift, Eccles M30 0DY every 1st Friday from 8pm

Known upcoming events

9th February – **NW MAG Fred Hill Run** - White Bull Gisburn BB7 4HE leaving at 1pm
 15th February 2020 – **British Bulldogs MCC Valentine Rock Night** at the Balcarres Arms
 22nd February 2020 – **Millennium 2000BC 20th Birthday Bash**, Canberra Club, Salmesbury
 13th March 2020 – **Road Reapers MCC St. Patrick's Rock Night** - Ellesmere Rd Rec Club, Bolton
 4th April 2020 – **Accrington MCC Rock Night** - Poplar Club, Accrington
 26th-28th June – **Blackpool MAG Rally**, Fleetwood Rugby Union Club, Melbourne Ave, Fleetwood FY7 8AY
 5th July – **NW MAG Stanley Park Motorcycle Show**, Italian Gardens, Stanley Park, Blackpool. FY3 9HU
 19th July – 2nd **HAMC Liverpool Ride in Bike Show** at the clubhouse Cotton St L3 7DY – prizes, food, bar, music
 25th July – 2nd **HAMC Manchester 666 Ride** – leaving from the clubhouse, Irlam
 7-9th August **Big Barn Rally** – (see FB)
 14-16th August – **Avernus MCC Underworld Rally** – Park House Barn, Milnthorpe LA7 7EB.
 11th-13th September - **Jesters MCC Rally**, Whittingham & Goosnargh Sports & Social Club, Preston PR3 2JE
 31st October – **Accrington MCC Halloween Night** - Poplar Club, Accrington

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@masafish.com and I'll put it into the newsletter next month.

Bill

NW Political Rep





NW MAG FRED HILL RUN SUNDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2020

WHITE BULL,
MAIN STREET (A59),
GISBURN BB7 4HE

*RIDE STARTS AT
13:00
PUB OPEN FROM
NOON*

**HOT BREWS
AND FOOD
AVAILABLE**



NW MAG AGM 2020

Starts at 2:30pm Sunday the 9th February
White Bull, Main Street (A59), Gisburn, BB7 4HE
(following the NW Fred Hill Run)

Please bring your membership card to vote
Any Nominations for NW Rep or any other
positions on the committee please contact
north-west-rep@mag-uk.org



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8TH-10TH MAY 2020

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SATURDAY THEME - WORLD WAR II

www.nabd.org.uk

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

07949 337508 Or E-mail bobtowler57@hotmail.co.uk



bobsbikeclasses.co.uk



Leyland Eagles M.C.C
Presents
'Tyred 'n' Exhausted 2'
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Blackpool Stanley Park Bike Show

Sunday July 5th 2020

11am - 4pm



**£2 Bike/Trike Parking
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RIBBLE 21**

**11TH-13TH
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2020

DETAILS OR BOOK ONLINE:
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MOB: 07971530190



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