



## Reasons to be cheerful (in tier three) Remix

It's like déjà vu all over again. A month of lockdown and now we escape into yet more lockdown. Businesses are struggling and the charity sector is finding things especially hard. However, nothing lasts forever and we'll be through this by next spring - Boris says so. We're just going to have to grin and put up with it all till then - as the Stoics say, "it's not events that trouble you, it's your opinion about them." Many thanks for your continued support for MAG. As you know, MAG has lost its major fundraising events this year and our membership is vital to keeping it going. This means that you've never been needed more.

## Pay per mile back on the cards

It looks like the Chancellor Rishi Sunak is seriously considering road charging for the UK, the system where you pay for the miles you travel. Apart from splashing out billions this year trying to keep the economy afloat, we also stand to lose over £40 billion in tax revenue with the shift away from petrol and diesel vehicles. The Treasury has researched the possible options for a national road pricing scheme and though plans are not imminent they are being seriously considered. At present fuel duty is levied at a flat rate of 57.95p per litre for both petrol and diesel, while VAT at 20% is then charged on both the product price and the duty. This amounted to £33.2 billion this year. Added to this is £7.1 billion from road tax (which is based on emissions).



The Labour government considered a similar scheme 13 years ago but dropped plans after a public uproar. Since then politicians have been reluctant to exhume the idea but desperate times call for desperate measures. Of course the scheme can only work if every vehicle has tracking software on board – I wonder if that will be made compulsory?

## Lock-up your bike during the lockdown



The Motorcycle Crime Reduction Group (MCRG) has urged motorcyclists to avoid complacency about security during the pandemic. Reassuring headlines about reduced crime during the pandemic may be less accurate when it comes to motorcycle theft.

The Office for National Statistics issued reports in August stating crime was down by 35% during the lockdown. Police National Computer (PNC) figures for stolen motorcycles are showing as much as a 45% reduction against the same period last year. These are all encouraging indicators, but input from

various MCRG member organisations leads the group to urge riders not to become complacent. Feedback from members suggests that the national figures do not give us the full picture on motorcycle theft. The national vehicle crime working group, which looks at all vehicles, report no reductions in overall vehicle theft. Figures from the PNC are known not to cover vehicles stolen and recovered within a few hours, nor vehicles which are not registered with the DVLA, such as off-road bikes. Businesses that monitor and recover bikes fitted with trackers are anecdotally reporting increases in thefts. The success and increasing numbers of trackers means that stolen bikes are often recovered very quickly, and thus never get added to the PNC.

The 2020 PNC data does show that London remains the hotspot for bike theft. The Metropolitan Police Force is reporting a staggering 66% of all stolen motorcycles and 49% of all stolen scooters recorded on the PNC. The message from the MCRG is take care to make your bike as secure as you can. This simple message applies wherever you live and wherever you need to park, but more so if you have to park in London.

Here are some things you can do to keep your bike secure. To maximise deterrence, use multiple security measures:

- During the day, park in a busy, public place.
- At night, if away from home, park in a well-lit area.
- Vary your parking place. Don't create a 'pattern' of use.
- When available always use a motorcycle parking bay with an anchor point.
- Use a "Secured Car Park" if there is one about.
- Engage the steering lock and lock/secure your bike - even if leaving it for just a couple of minutes.
- Cover your bike if possible.
- Use an approved D-shackle or chain lock.
- Secure your bike to something solid - stop it being carried or simply pushed away.
- Keep the lock and chain off the ground - it makes it more difficult to break.
- Always set your Immobiliser and alarm – it will help stop the opportunist thief or joyrider.
- At home, out of sight is invariably out of mind when it comes to a thief.
- Use an approved security marking and registration system.
- Use an approved GPS/VHF/RF satellite tracking system.

## Bikes not included in the 2030 ban

Despite all the well-known problems with electric vehicles – lack of charging points, too-short range, high purchase price etc – the government has decided to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030. I suppose they think that if they pass a law then we'll have to get these problems sorted, necessity being the mother of invention. Time will tell. Thankfully, petrol motorcycles are not included in the ban (for now). This, together with a long list of other measures such as outlawing gas boilers, aims to make us "carbon neutral" by 2050 whatever the cost. And what will we have achieved? Surely we will have stopped global warming? Unfortunately in 2017 the UK produced only 1.1% of global carbon emissions, compared to China's 28% (and rising). When it comes to the global climate the UK is not a really major player. Still, it's the thought that counts.

## Rishi's opportunity for motorcycling

The Chancellor's new £4 billion Levelling Up Fund is a great opportunity for motorcycling. Motorcyclists can win investment for secure parking facilities and bus lane access, so MAG advises members to contact their councillors and MPs.

Yesterday, Rishi Sunak unveiled a new £4 billion 'Levelling Up Fund' for England. It is money for schemes from bus lanes, to railway station upgrades. The Fund will finance a broad range of local projects.

Sunak said the initiative is about funding the infrastructure of everyday life. Projects must have real impact, be delivered quickly, and have local support. Motorcyclists are part of the community. We don't ask for much, but our needs are often overlooked. MAG therefore suggests that members speak to their local MP and councillors to ask for the installation of motorcycle-friendly infrastructure. You can propose that new bus lanes allow motorcycle access; or ask for regeneration projects to include secure motorcycle parking.



MAG Chair, Selina Lavender, said: "We are used to 'no money' being the response to all our requests. But this Levelling Up Fund is a great chance to get past that issue. We should seize it. If you have never contacted your councillor or MP before, now is the time to start. Let's see motorcycling level up and see some investment."

## Smart's not the word



When we first built motorways in this country (the M6 Preston bypass, opened December 5th 1958) we recognised that sometimes vehicles go wrong. A road littered with broken down Anglias and Moggy Minors which was also full of fast moving traffic could be somewhat problematic. So the designers incorporated an emergency “hard shoulder” as a refuge. This was a simple, low-tech solution that seemed to work pretty well for the next 50 years or so. Therefore, obviously, it had to be changed. These hard shoulders are seen as a wasted resource, rather like building developers view the green belt. After all, “smart” motorways don’t need hard shoulders – we have technology instead. So let’s use them as another lane.

If you break down on a “smart” motorway, unless you’re lucky enough to be next to a refuge, the chances are that you will grind to a halt in what is now the slow lane. But not to worry, in theory this lane will be instantly closed – not physically of course but someone will spot you on camera and make a big red X appear on a gantry. All other traffic will move over and you’ll be right as rain. This is supposing, of course, that someone is there to see you in the first place.

Highways England has now admitted that it is not possible to monitor all the cameras all the time. If you happen to break down when no-one’s watching, you’re pretty much on your own. Last year it took manual CCTV operators an average of 20 minutes to detect an obstruction and close the lane. Which doesn’t exactly inspire confidence in the system.

38 people have been killed on these roads in the last five years. Personally I think some features of the “smart” network are good ideas (variable speed limits seem to keep the traffic flowing at peak times). Removing the hard shoulder however is not one of them.

## Lost Rallies T-shirt



Following the cancellation of almost all of MAG’s fundraising events this year due to Covid-19, a special, limited edition ‘Lost Rallies’ t-shirt was designed and offered for sale in recognition of all the 2020 rallies that had to be cancelled and to help raise funds. The tee-shirt was kindly promoted by the MAG Foundation in support of MAG’s work on motorcycle theft.

The ‘Lost Rallies’ tee-shirt proved popular; so popular, in fact, that a second (and final) opportunity is being provided to obtain one of these tee-shirts.

Orders must be received no later than midnight on January 5th 2021, and will be posted out after January 25th, 2021.

The tee-shirts are available in sizes S to XXL at a price of £15.00, and in sizes 3XL and 4XL at a price of £16.00. Prices include postage costs.

<https://www.mag-uk.org/product-category/preorder/>

## Bigger wagons

In a bid to reduce vehicle emissions the government may increase the size of lorries allowed on UK roads. Length would increase by 2m from 13.6 to 15.6m (51ft) and the weight would increase by 4 tonnes from 44 to 48 tonnes. Concerns have been raised about the extra “tail-swing” when these lorries are turning. The government suggests that any increased risk from each lorry is balanced by there being fewer lorries on the road. Like having fiercer but fewer lions in the wild then?

## 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. However, under the current circumstances, very little on the calendar will actually be taking place.

**Please check the NW Alliance FB page for any last minute changes**

**Regular monthly events in normal times!**

**HAMC Liverpool Open night** 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of month, open 7.30 ‘til late

**HAMC Manchester Open night last Saturday of month** – **Not running at the moment**

**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

**Ronin MCC** – every Saturday night @ the Plough, Hazel Grove  
**Road Slayers Brotherhood** every 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday at the Veterans' Garage Barton – restarts 2<sup>nd</sup> week in September  
**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 George, Southport 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 – North Chadderton Social& Bowling Club, open night every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday  
**Veterans Garage** open at Barton Aerodrome every Monday 6pm onwards  
**Accrington MCC** meet every other Sunday at the Poplar Club, Accrington  
**Boggarts MCC** meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</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 @ 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 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month  
**Road Kill MCC** meet at the clubhouse, Unit 10, M44 5AZ, Irlam every Tuesday 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 ODY every 1<sup>st</sup> Friday from 8pm  
**Gawsworth Jesters MCC** meet at the Harrington Arms, Church Lane. Gawsworth SK11 9RJ, Weds evenings from 7.00pm.  
**Heathens MCC** – meet at the Top House, Oldham OL4 5TB first Wed of month @ 8pm  
**Wiccan Wolves MCC** meet @ Radcliffe Cricket Club M26 3RF every other Friday

**Known upcoming events –**

**Nothing until further notice!**

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

Bill

NW Political Rep



**MAG** *Safety & Security* **Foundation**

**WE are Promoting**

- LOOP CHAINS FOR EXTRA SECURITY** Lock 2 Lock
- DIESEL SPILLS KILL** DON'T OVERFILL SECURE YOUR FILLER CAP
- Get a Grip**

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