



July 2016 Network

A networking tool for Activists and other interested parties

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Copy for the August edition to aine@mag-uk.org by 25th July please

EDITORIAL.....

..... is going to be short this month as this edition is longer than usual.

Although I'm sorry to see Neil step down as a Director, I know we haven't lost him, however, since my stroke almost 3 years, I know only too well how precious one's health is so I hope he takes advantage of a rest from work as a Director to recover, concentrate on his family and business.

There are now two vacancies for Directors. Come on Guys, think about it. Details at the end of Selina's press release.

There's an article included in this edition on mobile phone use whilst driving, which you know is one of my pet hates, and it appears I'm not alone. A survey amongst drivers find they feel tougher penalties are necessary. Needless to say, these are my sentiments exactly. There isn't a day goes past when I don't see a driver on the phone. Why? Hands free, though not ideal in my humble opinion, is readily available for so little money.

Regarding the ban on pre 1999 motorcycles in Paris - Madness.

A last minute update on the Harlow Injunction a meeting has been set up for on 21st July when MAG will meet with the officers from the council, the police and the legal advisers to get a clear picture of the way ahead. We cannot risk having a dangerous precedent in place which could be reapplied elsewhere in the UK.

With that I'll sign off with the hope that July is far drier than June has been - I was beginning to think that instead of investing my money in the trike conversion I should have spent my money on a canoe ☺.

Ride free, *Aine*

[Acknowledgments: George Legg. Selina Lavendar. Lembit and Leon. Neil Liversidge. Colin Brown. Plus anyone else I've forgotten]

MAG Press release – June 2016.

Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) Director Neil Liversidge to stand down – 14th.

MAG has announced that one of the leading campaigners for motorcyclists' rights, Neil Liversidge, is resigning as Director of the organisation. Neil, who was one of the key leaders as MAG restructured itself into a proactive, politically energetic movement, said 'I wish MAG, the staff and all of you personally all the well in the world, and I exhort you to support your Board and in particular the National Chair who is doing a great job which I admire very much. MAG has never in my experience had a better team than it has today. You are doing a great job and can be proud of yourselves.'

MAG's Chair Selina Lavender has praised Neil's contribution to the riders' rights agenda across many years. 'Neil is MAG through and through. He's tirelessly contributed to our work at the cost of his health, his work and his family. No-one could have done more than Neil to help the organisation become the foremost voice for bikers in the UK and also in Europe. The Board and the National Committee wish to take this opportunity to formally thank Neil and acknowledge his dedication to the organisation. We all wish Neil well and look forward to seeing him at our events in the future.'

As a result the Board now has two Director vacancies, one of which is a financial role. Anyone interested in these positions should contact the Board via central-office@mag-uk.org.

Contact MAG at central-office@mag-uk.org and 01926 844 064



“Dear Fellow MAG Members

Last Thursday 9 June 2016 I asked MAG's Board for permission to resign, which permission it has graciously granted. My retirement is therefore effective as of 18.00 hours Saturday 11 June 2016. In the years 1989-2002 when I Chaired MAG, and the year or so before that when I served as a co-opted member of the NC, I did it 100%. I lived it. MAG was my priority above almost everything; certainly above my paid employment, and I always felt that I was

doing a great job. I know some others will disagree but they didn't have to stand in my boots and face the issues I faced. And I did face them. I never ducked one. The same was the case through the time of my return in 2012 and the Tribunal. I gave it everything and despite the undermining and the downright treachery we had to face, we got a great result. MAG today is the living proof. I regret nothing I did. I'm proud of every minute of it, every action and every decision and I would do the same again today in the same circumstances.

I have always believed in some words I heard Muhammad Ali speak many years ago. I remembered them on the morning last week I learned of his death. In the 24 years of my working life before I had my own business I had to take some jobs that weren't great under managers I'd rather not have had. Regardless, Ali's words inspired me to do every one of those jobs all as well as I could in the belief that it would pay off eventually. It did. I commend these words of The Greatest to anyone who wants to get on in life and make a success of anything they attempt:

"I would have been the world's greatest at whatever I did. If I were a garbage man, I'd be the world's greatest garbage man! I'd pick up more garbage and faster than anyone has ever seen. To tell you the truth, I would have been the greatest at whatever I'd done! "If you're going to do anything - be the greatest. Don't be satisfied with second best. Go first class. Put 100% effort into everything you do. Don't be slap dash. Add excellence as your secret ingredient to every task you undertake. Don't remain a follower. Determine to be a leader."

That is why I am retiring. I support MAG now as wholeheartedly as I did when I joined aged 18 in February 1982. I shall maintain my Membership. It may be that somebody kindly wishes to bestow Honorary Life Membership on me. Please don't; I prefer to pay my way. MAG's ideas are my ideals. MAG's principles are my principles. Writing chunks of the Constitution and the 'What is MAG' descriptor was a breeze to me. I didn't have to think hard on what to write because it came from the heart. None of that has changed. What has changed though is that with the growth of my business and my family, my life today is too full to allow me the time I need to properly fulfil the duties of a MAG Director. I have to make space in my life. I can't do the MAG job half-heartedly and be second best. If I can't put 100% in then I can't do the job at all.

So, goodbye. I wish MAG, its staff and all of you all the well in the world. The only advice I have to give is that you should remember the words of Muhammad Ali. Then you'll know what you need to do to be – and make MAG – The Greatest.

Ride Free, Neil F Liversidge, MAG Member 23660."

Team Double L – Leon and Lembit's Report

'Biker Friendly' London Mayor Pt. II

1. The new Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, made various pre-election promises to improve the treatment of bikers and motorcycling in the Capital. These included an assurance that MAG's Policy Adviser would be introduced to Sadiq's policy team.

Since the election, a primary focus for Leon has been on trying to ensure that MAG's input is included in the new Mayor's Transport Strategy right from the start of the development

process behind the scenes. He asked for a meeting with the Mayor's Chief of Staff, David Bellamy (not the bearded one) and Dr Nick Bowes as both of them have been Sadiq's most senior and trusted policy advisers for years.

In effect, these two policy professionals will shape the Mayor's strategy for the next four years – and manage/enforce the process of getting TfL to deliver it. Meanwhile, the Mayor appointed the Val Shawcross as his Deputy for Transport and Deputy Chair of TfL. And, Leon's request to meet the policy professionals was met with an invite to meet Val instead.

This could have been very good news for us as Val was the driving force behind the London Assembly's highly critical report in November 2015, of TfL's motorcycling policies. However, Val is no longer an Assembly Member aka elected scrutineer of TfL as she stepped down in May. Now she is on the Mayor's side and Deputy Chair of TfL.

The impact of that 'shift of sides' immediately became apparent when Leon entered the room to find that Val (from the Mayor's team) was accompanied by the TfL Director, Ben Plowden, who is the mastermind behind plans to eradicate the benefits of motorcycling in London...

In response to that 'challenging' situation, Leon has re-requested a meeting with the Mayor's key policy professionals and is expecting a response by the end of June.

2. The vote to leave the EU has the potential for boosting MAG's power to fight for riders' rights in the UK.

In amongst all the uncertainties, when it comes improving the way bikers are treated on UK roads, MAG will only have to engaged with members of Parliaments and Councils and offices in the UK.

Another thing that is already certain is that UK Government at central and local level (and especially London) will loose the capacity it had to blame an unelected force of bureaucrats in Brussels for imposing greater restrictions on motorcycling.

BUT: Nothing will happen quickly and the politics of UK biking is never simple.

We will also be shifting further into shift into a situation in which UK Ministers or Mayors could try to impose even greater restrictions on motorcycles and motorcycle use – but at least they won't be able to justify such moves on the basis of complying with new EU Directives or needing to avoid paying huge EU fines.

Whatever you think about the result, June the 24th was to some extent an Independence Day for bikers in the UK.

3. Proof that Orcas and Armadillos are too dangerous for UK roads.

SPREAD THE WORD PLEASE

At last we have tangible proof that light segregation schemes ARE a dangerous trip hazard. Two highly pro-cycling Authorities in London have just taken major Orca schemes out because they tripped up so many vulnerable road users and mots were mostly pedestrians. This has been confirmed in Local Transport Today (LTT) which is the most respected

publication for the most influential Transport Policy Professionals and elect members in the UK. (See article below etc)

LTT697 13 May - 26 May 2016

Councils remove 'hazardous' low level cycle lane dividers

CYCLING

by Andrew Forster

THE CITY of London and the borough of Camden have removed low-level plastic/rubber blocks that separate cycle lanes from the rest of the carriageway after numerous instances of pedestrians tripping over them.

The City of London installed 'mini-orcas' on the inside of the white line separating a cycle lane from the rest of the carriageway on Aldgate High Street but removed them after four weeks.

A spokesman explained the background to LTT: "The traffic separator devices, known as 'mini-orcas' were installed on Aldgate High Street at the request of the mayor's Cycling Commissioner [Andrew Gilligan] and Transport for London. They were removed after four weeks.



The City has removed mini-orcas installed on Aldgate High Street

"After installation several people reported tripping over them while crossing the street so the City of London installed cameras to monitor road user conflict with the mini-orcas.

"In a 24-hour period there were over 50 pedestrians who tripped or fell over them. Cyclists passing through the area have also told us that the mini-orcas do not provide enhancement or safety for them."

Asked what would happen next, the spokesman said: "They will soon be replaced with reflective road studs alongside the cycle markings. These have a lower profile and are therefore less of a trip-hazard for pedestrians." Aldgate High Street was the only place in the City where the blocks were installed.

The London Borough of Camden has also removed similar

features. "Orcas have been removed between Gower Street and Tottenham Court Road," said a spokesman. In a statement, the council added: "Following the start of the trial in November 2015, the council has received a number of reports from pedestrians who have tripped over the rubber blocks that separate the westbound cycle lane from the adjacent traffic lane, commonly known as 'orcas'. Although removing the orcas removes protection for cyclists, in this section of the route motorised traffic travels in the same direction as the new cycle lane (westbound), which means that cyclists are not in conflict with oncoming traffic."

Camden is retaining orcas on the remainder of the Torrington / Tavistock corridor experimental traffic scheme. It is also retaining planters and 'armadillos' in Royal College Street.

Leon discovered that The City of London (the Square Mile) installed CCTV to monitor a scheme using the 'Mini Orcas' that Graeme Hay told BMF members were basically fine in their members magazine. However, within 24 hours of the scheme going live more than 50 people were filmed tripping over and some caused injuries and being tipped into the course of traffic.

Something equally dramatic must have resulted from a scheme that was quickly taken out near Tavistock Square by the London Borough of Camden – who were the first UK Authority to install Armadillos in the UK.

4. Lembit generated a MAG consultation response for Scottish proposals about variable speed limits and use of hard shoulders. This is entirely consistent with our regular calls for access to bus lanes around the UK. The evidence from London proves we really do reduce accidents for bikers AND cyclists when we are in bus lanes. While the ones in Scotland in the scheme we're looking at are specifically related to high winds, it seems logical to ensure we can access those lanes too. Scottish rep Steve Wykes is very closely involved in this, and he's been guiding Lembit on the issues. 'He's a fantastically active MAG rep,' observes Lembit.

5. MAG has commented publicly on a very serious threat to biking liberty in France. Paris is introducing a biking ban for any machine built before 1999. 'This is insane,' says Lembit. 'It's obvious an average 125 is far, far cleaner and greener than just about any car. So why ban old and low pollution bikes instead of creating emissions standards instead? People can drive gas guzzling Ferraris through the centre of the city, so this is more to do with gesture politics than ecology. MAG continues to fight this kind of discrimination.
 6. Paul Wilson in Northern Ireland has organised a MAG event in Belfast on 27th July, 2016. Paul's a live wire who really cares about keeping MAG's political activity at the forefront of the riding agenda. It's hoped that this meeting will kick start a very active MAG team in Northern Ireland in the next few months.
 7. We have a new press release system. Simply send an email entitled PR to the NC list and Lembit will turn it into a sendable press release. Don't' spender than 145 minutes on your version - was long as you include the contact details for yourself, MAG will do the rest.
 8. President Mutch had his camera stolen at the Farmacyard event in one of the bars on Friday night. Any information about this would be most welcome.
 9. MAG is supporting the father of a son killed in a bike accident in Warwick. David Owen lost Daryl to a head on with a bus last year. It looks like the road surface might be responsible. We're working on getting Councils to take the issue sod poorly maintained road surfaces very seriously.
 10. Lembit is in continuing dialogue and meetings with Harlow Council, to try and replace an injunction which seems to ban pall ride outs across Harlow for certain times. Lembit will keep you posted on details- or get in touch with him anytime for an honest and sensible appraisal of the situation.
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MORE MAG PRESS RELEASES

(16th)

Northamptonshire County Council – first in UK to promote modal shift towards motorcycles

The Motorcycle Action Group has praised Northamptonshire County Council as the first in the UK to actively pursue modal shift from cars to motorcycles. This strategy has been a cornerstone of MAG's policy position, as outlined in its *Pathways to Progress* document. Northamptonshire's announcement comes in the lead up to the International Ride to Work Week;20 – 26th June 2016. Their strategy and thinking behind the move is superbly covered in a short video – see link below.

MAG Chair, Selina Lavender, said 'Northamptonshire have shown a forward thinking attitude to helping solve the congestion issue faced in many towns and cities across the UK. We welcome this initiative and look forward to other counties following their lead.'

John Spencer, Team Leader of Road Safety and Travel Choices, Northamptonshire Highways says: 'As part of our modal shift strategy Northamptonshire County Council intends to embrace motorcycles and scooters as a sustainable transport mode within the future countywide transport programme. Greater use of motorcycles can bring

environmental, congestion and accessibility benefits, particularly on journeys made for commuting to places of employment or education.'

Mr Spencer adds 'the road safety team in Northamptonshire is committed to improving safety for all road users but is also looking at encouraging different ways to travel. In 2015 we carried out a motorcycle survey to reaffirm why people were using motorbikes, but also why they were not! We collaborate with various partners like the Motorcycle Industry Association, Get on Team and the Ride to Work team, to encourage people to take up motorcycling as a safe, sustainable and better way of getting around.'

For more information contact MAG at 01926 844 064 or central-office@mag-uk.org

Attachments: Background to Northamptonshire Project

About Ride to Work Week

Notes for Editors, Ride to Work Week (by Steve Muir, MCIA)

See this link: <https://youtu.be/unS274SU9OM>.

Background to Northamptonshire project

- **Motorcycle Northants** was recently launched by Northamptonshire County Council, making it the first local authority in the UK to actively encourage a modal shift towards motorcycles, which is currently just 0.4% of all commuter traffic in the county. This is part of a wider plan to encourage sustainable transport options, which also include cycling, walking and using public transport.
- Motorcycle Northants will encourage the county's leisure riders to use their bikes to commute, especially where distance by pedal bike is impractical, aiming for an initial modal shift of 3%. Each day in Northamptonshire, an estimated 43% of commuter journeys are made by just one person in a car or van, so there is great capacity for some of these to be made on a powered two wheeler.
- Northamptonshire recognises that journey times on motorcycles are shorter due to the ability to filter and reduced pressure on parking. This helps all road users, which is backed up by a European study showing when just 10% of car drivers swapped to a motorcycle, scooter or moped, then congestion for all road users is reduced by 40%.
- As a county which relies heavily on the distribution/logistics industry, it is important that the roads do not become congested. For the first phase of the project, Motorcycle Northants has put a framework in place to make sure existing and new riders have access to high quality training providers.
- A second phase of the project will include looking at increasing motorcycle friendly infrastructure on roads and working with employers to encourage the availability of workplace changing facilities and motorcycle parking.
- Around two-thirds of motorcyclists do not have commuter cover on their policy, so major motorcycle insurers Ageas, ERS and Carole Nash are making commuter insurance cover available free to existing customers during Ride to Work Week.

About Ride to Work Week

National Ride to Work Week spotlights the many benefits of commuting on a motorcycle, scooter or moped and will be particularly active in Northamptonshire this year. The county's residents will get the chance to try a motorcycle for free with Get On – the motorcycle industry's free 'try out' programme - during Ride to Work Week.

- These are available after work each evening at the Obelisk Centre, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, [NN2 8UE](#). Monday 20th to Friday 24th June between 6pm and 9pm each evening.
- Also available on Saturday 25th June at the [Silverstone Circuit](#), Towcester, Northampton, NN12 8TN between 9.15 am and 4.30 pm.
- [Get On sessions](#) are with professional instructors and last for half an hour. All protective clothing is provided. Get On provides a safe and structured introduction to motorcycling. There are also [opportunities to try motorcycling](#) in several parts of the UK during the Summer and Autumn. Booking via the website www.geton.co.uk or by calling 02476 408040.

Notes for Editors

- UK motorcycle ownership has nearly doubled since 1996.[3]
- Studies show roads are safer for bikers when numbers rise.[4][5]
- Ride to Work Week is organised by the Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA).
- MCIA has represented the motorcycle industry for over 100 years.
- Ride to Work Week activity will also take place across the UK at a series of 'bikers' breakfasts' and ride-outs, with offers and competitions on [social media](#), where regular motorcycle and scooter commuters post updates about their journey into work.
- Northamptonshire is hosting the annual [BikeSafe Show](#) at Rockingham on July 18th 2016.
- Ride to Work Week promotes five main messages to highlight the benefits of riding:
 - o Save time
 - o Save money
 - o Easy Parking
 - o Road skills improve
 - o It's just more fun!

www.ridetoworkweek.co.uk

Stevie Muir, PR, Motorcycle Industry Association

[1]<http://www.tmleuven.com/project/motorcyclesandcommuting/home.htm>

[2] Information based on around 700,000 unique insurance quotes.

[3] The number of powered two wheelers licensed and license exempt has risen from 720,900 in 1994 to 1,312,200 for summer quarter 2015. Figures from Gov.UK Statistical Data Set Motorcycles (VEH03).

[4]<http://www.motorcycleframework.co.uk/more-motorcycling-fewer-casualties/>

[5] Target prevalence affects the detection of vehicles during simulated driving, Attention, Perception, & Psychophysics. Beanland, V. et al. (2014) Safety in numbers: DOI 10.3758/s13414-013-0603-1

Blanket ban on pre-1999 bikes in Paris ‘makes no logical sense:’ MAG

(22nd)

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) has hit out against Paris authorities which have announced plans to outlaw all motorcycles manufactured before June 1 1999 between 8am and 8pm from the city. The measure, scheduled to begin on July 1 2016, will be enforced with a €35 fine from 1st October. The ban was agreed by the Minister of Environment, the City of Paris, and the transport authorities.

The new policy contains some glaring contradictions, and the level of pollution generated by vehicles does not seem to be the key consideration. Vehicles in Paris already require a coloured badge to show the emissions group they belong to. Yet pre-1999 bikes will be banned regardless of the colour of the badge. That means that, even if a bike is ‘clean,’ it will be excluded from the city solely on the basis of age.

MAG Chair, Selina Lavender, has strongly rejected what she regards as an unfair and counter-productive scheme. ‘Whatever problems Paris has with air quality aren’t going to be fixed by a blanket ban on older bikes. For one thing, even an aging scooter has a tiny environmental footprint compared to most new cars. So what’s the logic of banning a ‘good’ form of transport on the basis of what looks like political dogma? Also, the total amount of road traffic made up of older bikes and pre-1997 cars – which will also be banned - is less than 10%. Of that, a miniscule proportion is bikes and scooters. So it makes no logical sense to ban this two-wheeled section of road traffic – as there’s going to be no measurable difference to air quality. It’s a discriminatory, badly thought out move which will make Paris hugely unattractive to thousands of owners of older and classic bikes.’

London is considering an ‘ultra-low emissions zone’ by 2020, which would introduce heavy charges for vehicles that do not meet stringent emissions standards. MAG has repeatedly raised the same concerns about this move as it is about the Paris ban. ‘MAG is happy to work with the authorities to find sensible solutions to common concerns,’ adds Selina. ‘What we won’t tolerate is the systematic exclusion of one of the most eco-friendly forms of powered vehicles ever invented, just because the decision-makers haven’t bothered to take a strategic - and sane - look at the consequences of what they’re doing.’

MAG Position Statement

Drink Driving

History

Believe it or not the first drink driving law was introduced in 1872 and included penalties for driving a steam engine whilst intoxicated but it was in 1967 that the road side breathaliser legislation was introduced. In subsequent years the testing technology has improved and the legislation amended to reflect current trends and thinking in transport safety.

Drink driving accidents and casualties have fallen by approximately 75% since 1979 but in 2014 there were still 8220 casualties of which 240 experienced fatal injuries in drink related accidents.

Department of Transport statistics for 2004 to 2014 show a 40% reduction in the proportion of drivers involved in accidents failing breath tests. Over the same period the proportion of riders involved in accidents failing breath tests fell by 48%. Of those riders or drivers killed, car drivers are twice as likely to be over the drink driving limit than riders.

The Law

There are no guidelines on how much you can drink and drive without breaking the law. The way drink (and drugs) affects you depends on many factors related to weight, sex, metabolism, the type of alcohol, what you've eaten, and even stress. The limits in Scotland are different to the rest of the UK.

Level of alcohol	England, Wales and Northern Ireland	Scotland
Micrograms per 100 millilitres of breath	35	22
Milligrammes per 100 millilitres of blood	80	50
Milligrammes per 100 millilitres of urine	107	67

The penalties for getting caught are severe with unlimited fines and up to 14 years in prison for causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink. More details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/drink-driving-penalties>

In addition you might lose your job, experience relationship problems, have difficulty travelling to other countries (because you now have a criminal conviction) and when you do finally get your licence back your insurance costs will have risen dramatically. See www.drinkaware.co.uk for more information.

Currently

There are presently no plans to lower the drink driving limits in England and Wales to match those in Scotland. The Scottish authorities claim that you are 6x more likely to die in an accident if you are over the 50mg limit. Studies have shown that almost any blood alcohol increases the risk of accidents. Most countries with zero blood alcohol limits have done so for religious reasons (BBC News, Oct 2014).

MAG position

MAG abhors driving or riding whilst under the influence of alcohol (or drugs including so called "legal highs"). In the past MAG has questioned the leniency sometimes shown in courts where drink drivers have been involved in collisions where riders have been killed or seriously injured. There is no valid excuse for driving or riding whilst under the influence of drink or drugs.

West Midlands

Colin Brown, Political Officer for West Midlands Region attended a public meeting held at Billesley Police Station in Birmingham on Monday 27th June. The meeting was hosted by the Police and attended by local residents and councillors to discuss concerns about

antisocial behaviour being carried out on bikes around the local area. Tensions were understandably high amongst residents who face intimidation and risk of accidents on local roads and public spaces. The local police are using the existing legislation to tackle the problem and additional resource has been allocated. Colin was able to offer support by suggesting that he would contact local MAG members to encourage them to give any intelligence that might assist the police in identifying the offenders. Colin also took the opportunity after the public meeting to offer help and suggestions on possible solutions addressing the underlying issues without going down a route of criminalising legitimate activity by the local motorcycling members of the community. This was well received by the Police. Attendance at the meeting has shown an intelligent and supportive approach by Motorcycle Action Group that, it is hoped, will help guard against any sweeping prohibitions of the sort witnessed in Harlow.

MAG Article first published in Back Street Heroes, Issue 387 (July 2016)

I regularly hear people saying that MAG needs to attract young people; yes we do and no-one in the organisation would deny it. The reality is we are all getting older and we need fresh, young blood coming in to the organisation. It's the riders of tomorrow that are needed to keep the work going, engaging with policy-makers and ensuring that riders get treated on a par with other road-user groups.

Who do we consider to be young people? Well, some time ago we had this discussion on MAG's National Committee and it was decided that 'under-25's' would be defined as young people; i.e. those who are old enough to ride and yet are restricted by the categorised licencing laws. This is the criteria we used to set the young persons' discounted membership fee. We still offer a discount in the first year for all under-25's. MAG does have success in engaging with young people at a local level. Groups welcome anyone that comes along to a meeting or event, regardless of their age or their ride. When group rides out are planned, learner riders are considered and either the main route is learner-friendly or a second route is offered with the same destination. Young people that come to MAG find out about us and join us by any number of different ways just as older riders do.

The real question (rather than 'How does MAG attract young members?') is 'How does biking attract younger people?' Unfortunately, no-one seems to have the answer. There is no magic formula that equals young people taking up riding, which would, in turn, see more young riders joining MAG.

There are a number of factors that can be identified as to why the youth of today are not taking up riding:

One of the obvious ones to those of us with our full licence is the categorised, or stepped, motorcycle licence. The route is completely overcomplicated and difficult for many to understand. If you were to follow the new system, taking every test, you would take six or more tests (including the theory test) to obtain a full licence. This of course all comes at a cost to the individual. Whilst this does undoubtedly put people off, there are also those who, once they've come in to riding via this route, want the constant training and reassurance it offers. We should also remember that young people have grown up with a test culture.

Lack of income: as many young people stay on in education (both due to the extended school leaving age and the university culture), many are coming in later to employment and therefore do not have the ability to purchase their own bike. So those without income not only need the inclination to want to learn to ride and jump through all the hoops, they are also reliant on a family member purchasing a suitable vehicle for them and probably lending them money to keep it running and keep themselves legal.

Another reason (which I heard over 30 years ago when I was 16) is, 'it's dangerous and my mum/dad/insert significant person in young person's life, won't let me have one'. This unfortunately often relates to a close family member or friend having been seriously injured or killed whilst riding. It always seems odd to me that the same logic does not apply in relation to cars.

Importantly there are also fewer teenagers around today. Birth rates in the UK in 1966 (which would make you 50 this year) were significantly higher than those in 1998 (which would make you 18 this year). So even if biking were attracting the same percentage of new, young riders, there would be less of them.

Does this mean that I think biking is dying? Not at all. There are still young people of 16 and over getting in to biking whilst they are still at school, doing what they can to get the money together. Some because it's the lifestyle they've grown up in, others with a real passion for all things two-wheeled. What it means to me is that people are getting in to biking when they are older. So, whilst we can look to appeal to those young riders that are out there, there are not the numbers of them that there once was. We can throw time and money at trying to attract today's young people; however what they want is not necessarily what we think they want. If you ran a workshop talking to young people in large numbers, each would possibly give you a different reason why they would or wouldn't get on a moped and give it a whirl.

We can then, from a MAG perspective, tie this in to 'Are young people activists?' Were any of us activists at a young age? Some of you will have been, either being aware of the trade-unionists or perhaps believing that you could change the world. My experience of today's young people is that they don't have these same life experiences. Whilst in many ways they have the world at their finger tips, they have not experienced independence or explored beyond their own peer group. This leads me to wonder what the word 'freedom' means to the young people of today? Are they perhaps looking for freedom from the adult world? Do we now represent that?

The world has certainly moved on from when I was young.

If, like me, you enjoy nothing better than spending a weekend in the great outdoors, chatting with other riders about all manner of subjects then why not join us at one of our events? Check out the 'events' tab on our website (www.mag-uk.org). You'll find old favourites such as The Farmyard Party (17th – 19th June, Helmsley) and new events for this year like the South East Summer Festival (29th – 31st July at Horsham Rugby Sports & Social Club).

Remember you can support us by becoming a member, be that as an individual, affiliated club or corporate.

Until next time, Ride Free. Selina, Chair of The Motorcycle Action Group

To join MAG, or find out more, you can contact our central office on 01926 844 064 (Monday – Friday, 9 – 5), visit a local meeting, talk to us at an event or find us via the Internet at www.mag-uk.org

TfL extends average speed camera pilot

Transport for London (TfL) has extended a pilot of average speed cameras to three more major roads across the city in a bid to improve safety and driver behaviour.

Two of the new locations came into operation last week (17 June) on roads with 40mph and 50mph limits, with a third set to become operational in September on another 50mph limit road.

Average speed cameras are already in use on motorways across the UK. Research for the RAC Foundation, published last month, revealed more than 250 miles of roads in Great Britain are now monitored by average speed cameras.

TfL says its pilot will measure their effectiveness in reducing speed related road casualties across a wider area - not just at spot locations where drivers can slow down and speed up again once they have passed the camera.

The cameras use automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) to record a vehicle's speed at distances along a stretch of road, and then calculate the average speed between two points.

TfL is using roadside message signs to alert drivers to the new system and has worked closely with the relevant borough councils - including Brent, Ealing, Barnet, Richmond, Hounslow, Bexley and Greenwich - to install the new camera systems.

- See more at: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/5139.html#sthash.kj3iiCCL.dpuf>
-: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/5095.html>

And, talking of cameras

Birmingham to reintroduce average speed cameras

Average speed enforcement cameras are to be reintroduced in the Midlands in a bid to encourage drivers to adhere to the speed limit.

The cameras, which will be located across Birmingham and Solihull, will be switched on from 18 July.

Under the watchful eye of Birmingham City Council and Solihull Borough Council, they will be operational for a term of five years. An initial 21-month evaluation phase is to take place, assessing the effectiveness of the cameras, equipment and the overall system.

Latest figures show that in the years 2010-2014, there were 2,356 people killed or seriously injured in Birmingham and Solihull, an average of 471.2 per year.

Research for the RAC Foundation, published last month, revealed more than 250 miles of roads in Great Britain are now monitored by average speed cameras.

The plan to reintroduce camera speed enforcement on the roads of Birmingham and Solihull was formally agreed late last year. It is hoped that the initial pilot will help inform the wider efforts to make the region's roads as safe as they can possibly be.

Councillor Stewart Stacey, Birmingham City Council, said: “Most people will see no impact to their overall journey time as this is all about enforcing speed limits that already exist on the roads in question – all of which are routes with a significant record for accidents historically.

“It will only be the minority who continually exceed the speed limit and endanger others who will be caught by our adoption of this new modern technology.”

Councillor Ted Richards, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, added: “This new digital technology will play a very important role in keeping the region’s roads safe.

“Thousands of people use the roads through Birmingham and Solihull every day and any work that local authorities can do to keep them safe is certainly positive.

“The cameras, and associated signs, are very noticeable; the only people being caught are those who choose to ignore them.”

- See more at: <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/news/ArtMID/820/ArticleID/1264/Average-Speed-Enforcement-ASE-camera-project-to-begin>

Don’t get caught out at MoT Test time with faulty tyre pressure sensors

While I support technology that enhances safety, it should not replace manual checks. Tyre pressures, for example, may not be the most interesting of car maintenance chores but they are one of the most important. Tyre Pressure Monitoring Sensors (TPMS) give a driver early warning of either incorrectly inflated tyres, or a puncture. The technology started to appear on mainstream vehicles from the turn of the New Millennium, prior to becoming mandatory on all new motorcars at the beginning of last year.

The British Government views working sensors as so critical to safety, it included them within the remit of the MoT Test, on cars registered from 2012. According to TyreSafe, using data from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, nearly 20,000 cars failed their MoT Tests between April 2014 and March 2015, due to faulty Tyre Pressure Monitoring Systems (TPMS). The not-for-profit tyre safety organisation accuses thousands of British motorists of failing to maintain essential road safety systems and endangering themselves and other road users as a result.

Service, not replace

On most cars, providing that a warning is not displayed on the dashboard, the TPMS system should be working correctly. However, as a sensor resides within each road wheel (on many cars), they should be serviced at every tyre change. This involves replacing the inner core and several washers and seals; most service kits should not cost in-excess of £20.00 per sensor. A typical in-wheel TPMS sensor is pictured, alongside its service kit that retailed from a main dealer at around £5.00.

Replacing sensors

The sensors themselves tend to last between eight and ten years, before replacement is due. On older cars, where TPMS is not an MoT Test requirement, it might be possible to disable the system but this is unlikely to be looked upon favourably by your insurance company. As replacing all four wheel sensors on an older car (including fitting and coding

them) is likely not to be viable economically, when the car's overall value is considered, owners of such vehicles may be relieved to hear that generic sensors are available, which tend to be neither as costly, when compared to genuine dealer-supplied parts, nor do they need specific coding to the vehicle, which saves fitting time and cost. Ask your tyre fitter for details.

Beware of the fakes

With Schrader reporting that copies of its TPMS valves are circulating on the market, which do not pass the company's quality control tests, we would advise against buying any suspiciously-cheap sensors that might be found on some online auctions, or stores. As the integrity of the sensor guards against a sudden tyre deflation, we would argue that fitting sub-standard parts is a serious false economy and safety risk.

BE WARNED - Scammer Scammed, Biter Bit!

It all started on the morning of Monday 2 February 2015 shortly after 9am. My operations manager Mrs Charlotte Kelso who's also an adviser in my firm received an email purporting to come from a lady client of ours, a retired headmistress, requesting a valuation. I'll call the client Josie – not her real name. A short while later an identical email came addressed to me. The email address checked out with the one we had on file so we confirmed the balance. In short order a reply came back requesting that we initiate a transfer 'to secure a vital business deal'. This rung a few alarm bells so we tried contacting Josie. Getting no answer to our calls we left messages on her mobile answering service. In between times we kept the email conversation going with some generic information about timescales and methods of making payment. Then Josie called. She knew nothing of the emails we'd been sent. Checking with her phone company it turned out she'd been sent two emails to her smart phone that morning. Not recognising the sender she'd deleted the first but had opened the second without realising it. Attached to it was a virus which ripped her entire contact list from her phone and allowed the scammers to clone her AOL email account. I'm guessing they went through her contact list, found two email addresses at our domain, checked out our website and seeing we are in financial services, put two and two together to realise she probably had money with us.

We advised Josie to speak to the police immediately and to change her passwords. We also asked if she'd be happy for us to string the scammers along to see if we could get more information on them. She gave us the go ahead and the 'emailspiel' started. I call it the 'emailspiel' – email play – because the idea behind it was inspired by the Second World War funkspiel (radio play) counterintelligence operation run by the German Abwehr to lure SOE agents into Holland. My idea was to lure the scammers to our office where West Yorkshire CID would stand in for the Gestapo. I also phoned Action Fraud. After wasting the best part of an hour they weren't interested, assuring me there was no chance of catching them and advised me to discontinue contact. They did however assure me that my information was valuable. Yeah, right.

With the go ahead from Josie our emailspiel commenced, using Charlotte's email account for the time being. We emailed the scammers asking 'Josie' for the sort code and account number she wanted to use. If nothing else I was determined to get the account frozen. I figure that the more accounts are taken out of use the harder it is for these people to operate. 'Josie' replied saying she was out of the country and wanted to use a different account to her normal one – exactly what we'd expected. We noticed that her emailed

replies were timed earlier than ours and figured she was in a timezone an hour or two east of GMT – central or Eastern Europe we figured.

At this point Charlotte was getting nervous with visions of upset mafia hitmen turning up in Castleford, so I took over the correspondence. Replying to the email 'Josie' had sent me, I played along, wishing her luck with her new business venture and saying I was 'sorry to see her go'. They were hooked. In came an email asking how fast the funds could be transferred. This email was interesting. Josie's surname has an 'l' in it. The latest email however had a double-l where the single l I had previously been. Josie having changed her password, the scammers had lost their cloned AOL account. Hoping we wouldn't notice they set up a near-identical alternative. We noticed. I replied giving a seven to ten working days timescale for payment and again asked for her bank details. By now it was afternoon. They replied giving account details at a NatWest in Manchester for an account holder with an Asian name – I'll call him Mr K. They wanted £29,080 transferring. Straight away we contacted Action Fraud asking that they have NatWest close the account. Action Fraud said they couldn't help.

I'd need to do it myself. I started referring to them as Inaction Fraud. Having a NatWest here in Castleford we went into the bank, explained the situation and asked them to contact their internal security people. To our amazement they said that as their internal systems were so slow it would take weeks for the report to get to the right place if it ever got their at all and we'd be better off contacting the branch direct.

I was starting to understand why fraud is such a massive problem and why the scammers so often get away with it.

I wrote to the bank but never had an acknowledgment of any kind, despite several chase letters. Hopefully the account was eventually frozen.

To keep the scammers warm we faked up a 'sold' contract note and told them the deal had been done. They thanked us politely. The next day they emailed Charlotte again 'to confirm the process of the sales today'. I replied saying Charlotte was in Australia on holiday for six weeks and saying it would take 10 days for the payment to clear. Fast forward six days and on 9th February they emailed again asking for an 'ongoing sales update'. I sent a one-liner saying we were waiting for the product provider to pay out. 13th February. They emailed saying they'd waited 9 days. Correct! We kept them hanging on. 16th February. A terse email arrived complaining that no funds had been deposited yet. I replied saying the provider had paid us owing to the anti-money laundering regulations preventing them paying it to a third-party account. I offered to deliver the cash to the Manchester contact or, alternatively, they could collect it from us. They came back asking us to pay the funds over to Mr K by bank transfer but I replied pleading the anti-money laundering regulations and suggesting they send their friend to pick up the cash. Back they came again asking that just £5000 be transferred – not the £29,080 they'd originally requested – and telling me to keep £500 for my trouble. Nice try! We stonewalled citing the anti-money laundering regulations and again asked them to 'pick up the cash' but to give me a couple of days' notice.

They bit. On Tuesday 17th February they confirmed Mr K would pick up the cash. They asked where we could "hook up". I suggested an M62 service station. I wanted to keep it away from the office in case of any rough stuff, plus I figured that a service station would be easy for the police to seal off. Visions of scammers legging it cross-country over snow covered Pennine hills...

While all this was going on I was talking to the local CID – or trying to. My calls were going unreturned and nobody appeared to be taking it seriously. I needed to play for time while

the cops got organised. Or, at least got interested. It wasn't looking good for organising something on the motorway. My next ploy was straight from Sun Tzu. Inventing a new staff member 'David Hardy' we told the scammers that "Mr Liversidge has had to fly out to Brussels on urgent business", putting off the collection to the following Monday. Back came a stropy email complaining about the delay. 'David' replied saying they'd need to pick the funds up from the office. We offered a 4pm appointment for Friday 20th February. They took the bait and emailed a scanned driver's license to satisfy our demands for ID evidence. The collection was to be made by a Ugandan lady I'll call Mrs N from our office at 4pm Friday 20th February 2015. The meeting was on. The only problem was that with less than 24 hours to go I still had no real interest from the police.

Thursday evening 19th February. I finished my regular BBC spot and called into the main Killingbeck police station in East Leeds. Explaining the situation the CID got interested at last. I drove back to Castleford to meet two detective constables and to give a witness statement. That was as much as they could do. They were off the next day. I'd need to go through it all again with two different officers the next day. Great.

Friday 20th February. A detective called. This guy at least was on the ball. I told them to keep the uniforms away from the office in case it was being watched. We agreed that they'd come in around 3pm to be in place before Mrs N arrived. Plain clothes officers would be in the street. We sat drinking coffee and chatting, me and the two detectives, waiting for 4pm to arrive. The game plan was that once Mrs N rang our doorbell the cops would hide in the back room in earshot while I engaged her in conversation to see what her story was. My PA, Toni, was to go in the back room with them just in case it got rough. There was a lot of joking around. I could tell from their faces that they thought it would be a no-show. Then one said "What if they do turn up and they're carrying a sawn-off?" It had occurred to me that things might get heavy. Supposedly one woman would be coming alone but who was to say there wouldn't be some heavies with her? By my desk I had an old gas-lift leg from a broken office swivel chair. Fifteen inches long, steel, an inch and a half in diameter and weighing a full kilo, at the first sign of any kind of weapon I had every intention of connecting it with the offender's head. They wouldn't have got up again.

At 4pm my phone rang. Mrs N was in the street and looking for our office. Toni and the cops scrambled into the back room. On our cameras I could see Mrs N was alone. I buzzed her in and asked her to sit in my office. I asked how she knew Josie. Through her brother supposedly. He and Josie were going into the art business. They were in New York buying stock. Except that I knew Josie was at home in Huddersfield.

The cops had heard enough. In they came and made the arrest. A plain clothes female officer was let in from the street and we gave her the back room to search Mrs N. She was very cool and claimed to be an innocent dupe who'd been set up by her brother. Maybe she was.

The latest is that she probably won't be prosecuted. Her brother is still wanted as is Mr K. We did all we could but it was an uphill struggle from start to finish. At the end of it all I have no faith in the banks or Action Fraud and not much more in the police.

But we did our bit. And we got one. And it was bloody good fun! Neil F Liversidge

Motorists back tougher mobile phone penalties

More than half of motorists believe the current penalty for using a mobile while driving should be more severe, according to research by the RAC.

In a survey of 2,100 drivers from the RAC opinion panel, 52% felt the standard penalty of three penalty points and a fine of £100 for drivers caught using a handheld mobile phone at the wheel should be increased.

Despite the backing for tougher penalties, nearly a third (31%) of those surveyed also said that increasing the penalty will not make any difference at all in changing the behaviour of drivers who are prepared to break the law in this way.

The findings have been published today (13 June) with the outcome of a Government consultation on increasing the penalties for illegal phone use when driving due to be published imminently.

The consultation, launched in January, sought feedback on proposals for increasing the fixed penalty notice (FPN) level from £100 to £150 for all drivers.

It also invited views on increasing the penalty points from three to four points for non-HGV drivers and from three to six points for those who commit the offence while driving an HGV.

Of the motorists who feel the penalty should be increased, a fifth (21%) think both the number of penalty points and the fine should be raised. 12% said just the fine should be increased, whereas 6% stated that only the points should be

11% believe disqualification from driving is the answer, with the majority of those (52%) saying this is the only deterrent likely to make a difference.

Against a back-drop of falling police numbers, two-thirds of the motorists surveyed (68%) stated a desire for more police officers to catch offenders.

Simon Williams, RAC spokesman, said: "In the 13 years since specific legislation was introduced making it illegal to use a handheld phone while driving, mobile phones have evolved into smartphones, and the increased features offered by apps and faster internet access has raised interaction among users to near addiction levels.

"While being glued to the screen of a mobile phone when walking is dangerous enough, doing the same thing at the wheel of a vehicle, even just occasionally, is a recipe for disaster.

"Changing this behaviour will only come through a combination of actions. We need more rigorous enforcement of the law, increased penalties that act as a meaningful deterrent and a high profile advertising campaign that makes motorists fully aware of the serious consequences of using a handheld phone at the wheel of a vehicle."

- See more at: <http://www.rac.co.uk/press-centre#/pressreleases/motorists-want-more-severe-penalties-for-illegal-mobile-phone-use-1437297>

Beware the road to hail

Breakdown organisations are advising drivers to be ready for spells of severe weather this summer. The warning follows a number of incidents already this year where hailstorms were occurring at the time.

GEM chief executive David Williams MBE says: “Although hailstorms in the UK are only occasional, they can strike at any time of year, with little notice, and will create treacherous driving conditions immediately. Your car’s grip on the road and your ability to see are reduced, leading to a significant increase in your risk of losing control.

“If you find yourself in a hailstorm, consider pulling over to a safe place so that the likelihood of the hail breaking the windscreen is reduced. Is possible, park under a bridge or canopy to minimise damage to your car.

“If you do decide to pull over, stay in your car. Hail falls at high speeds and can cause injuries.

“If you can’t stop under a bridge or canopy, park with your car angled so that the hail will hit the front. After all, your windscreen is reinforced and will be better able to withstand the pelting it could from a hailstorm. Glass in the side windows and rear screen is not as strong and will be damaged more easily.”

Hail: fast facts

The word “hail” (frozen rain) together with its German and Dutch relative “hagel”, comes from the prehistoric West Germanic word “hagalaz”, which is related to the Greek word “kákhlēx”, which means “pebble”.

Hailstones consist mostly of water ice and measure between 5 millimetres (0.2 in) and 15 centimetres (6 in) in diameter. Hail is different from sleet because sleet falls in cold weather while hailstones grow much bigger when surface temperatures are higher.

Hail is estimated to cause around £705 million in property and crop damage each year. The costliest hailstorm happened in April 2001, from eastern Kansas to southwest Illinois. Property damage in this storm exceeded \$2.4 billion (£1.7 billion).

Tennis ball sized hail fell on Munich and surrounding areas on 12 July 1984. It was the greatest loss event in the history of the German insurance industry: 200,000 cars were damaged and the storm cost an estimated £100 million. For years afterwards people jokingly referred to those cars whose bodywork was not repaired as ‘Munich Design’.

On 24 July 1996, orange-sized hailstones caused almost £210 million worth of damage in the Canadian cities of Calgary and Winnipeg, as well as serious flooding. Notably, one third of all cars damaged by the storm were deemed irreparable.

In May 2013 a storm dropped hailstones with a diameter of up to 8cm across large parts of southern Germany. Around 70 people were injured by hail and lightning strikes. Total damage inflicted by the hailstorm was measured at about £2.7 billion.

'The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) exists to secure your right to ride, free from prejudice, conformity and unreasonable state interference.'

How MAG began

MAG was formed to oppose a law making it a crime to travel on a powered two wheeler without a helmet. The principle of personal choice was key – as the only person directly affected by NOT wearing a crash helmet is the individual. MAG regarded the new law as a violation of our civil liberties. Over the years MAG has embraced a wide range of issues of relevance to all bikers for both ideological and practical reasons and justifying the phrase: 'MAG is the heart and soul of biking.'

MAG's first 'Mission Statement'

MAG's original mission, written by hand in a meeting on 28th June, 1973, was:

'...the preservation of motorcyclists' freedom. MAG is opposed to all oppressive and discriminatory legislation aimed at motorcycling. MAG will achieve its objectives by: well organised demonstrations, publicity campaigns, lobbying Members of Parliament and writing and enlightening the non-motorcycling public.'

This statement was reaffirmed by MAG in December 2013 and is at the core of why we exist.

MAG also has a major social aspect, but its core purpose remains the preservation of your right to ride.

MAG Central Office:		
MAG, Unit C13, Holly Farm Business , Honiley, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 1NP.		
Tel: 01926 844064 Fax: 01926 844065 Email: central-office@mag-uk.org		
Executive Officer	Julie Sperling	central-office@mag-uk.org
Membership Administrator	Carol Ferrari	membership@mag-uk.org
Director of Communications & Public Affairs	Lembit Öpik	central-office@mag-uk.org
Campaigns & Policy Adviser	Leon Mannings	central-office@mag-uk.org
NATIONAL OFFICERS		
National Chairman	Selina Lavender	chair@mag-uk.org
National Vice-Chairman	Dave Hammond	vice-chair@mag-uk.org
National Finance Officer	Neil Liversidge	finance-officer@mag-uk.org
Network Co-Coordinator	Anne Gale	aine@mag-uk.org
President/ <i>TheROAD</i> Editor	Ian Mutch	theroad@mag-uk.org
National Reps Liaison Officer	Jane Carrott	nrlo@mag-uk.org
National Clubs Liaison Officer	Oliver Rose	clubs-officer@mag-uk.org
Events (Shows and Stands)	Position vacant	events@mag-uk.org
Director of TMAGL	Pete 'Veece' Davison	central-office@mag-uk.org
Director of TMAGL	Tony Cox	central-office@mag-uk.org
Director of TMAGL	Vacant	central-office@mag-uk.org
Director of TMAGL	Steve Wykes	central-office@mag-uk.org
Director of TMAGL	Ian Churchlow	central-office@mag-uk.org
Director of TMAGL	Vacant	central-office@mag-uk.org
Director of TMAGL	Selina Lavender	central-office@mag-uk.org
Regional Reps		

British Independent Islands	<i>Position Vacant</i>	british-independent-islands-region-rep@mag-uk.org
Cumbria	Michael Armstrong	cumbria-region-rep@mag-uk.org
East Anglia	Jo Streeton	east-anglia-region-rep@mag-uk.org
Lincolnshire	Alex Bridgwood	lincolnshire-region-rep@mag-uk.org
Eastern	Dave Hammond	eastern-region@mag-uk.org
East Midlands	<i>Position Vacant</i>	east-midlands-region-rep@mag-uk.org
Greater London	Tim Fawthrop (contact)	greater-london-region-rep@mag-uk.org
Herts & Essex (acting)	Jon Metcalf	herts-essex-region-rep@mag-uk.org
North East	Dave Wigham	north-east-region-rep@mag-uk.org
Northern Ireland	Paul Wilson (contact)	northern-ireland-region-rep@mag-uk.org
North Wales	Bill Hughes (Acting)	north-wales-region-rep@mag-uk.org
North West	Tony Cox	north-west-region-rep@mag-uk.org
Scotland	Steve Wykes	scotland-region-rep@mag-uk.org
South East	Ann France-Gardiner	south-east-region-rep@mag-uk.org
Southern	Tim Peregrine	southern-region-rep@mag-uk.org
South Wales	Gareth	south-wales-region-rep@mag-uk.org
South West	Tim Poole	south-west-region-rep@mag-uk.org
Thames Valley	Gareth Lewis	thames-valley-region-rep@mag-uk.org
Warwickshire	Roger Ford	warwickshire-region-rep@mag-uk.org
Western	Deb Rose	western-region-rep@mag-uk.org
West Midlands	Eddie Lowe	west-midlands-region-rep@mag-uk.org
Yorkshire	Oliver Rose	yorkshire-region-rep@mag-uk.org
OTHER CONTACTS		
MAP Ltd: Yorkshire region event organiser	Pete Walker	maphq@maphq.karoo.co.uk
Official MAG merchandise	Julie Sperling	events@mag-uk.org
The MAG Foundation – Trustee contact	Ian Williamson	info@mag-foundation.org