

Basingstoke MAG

02/09/10

Rep Keith:

Apologies: Little Red

Thanks to Colin for coming with me too Winchester MAG opening night. A good turn out by all Southern Region Groups to support this new group in our Region.

We will do a ride out to Winchester MAG in a few weeks. It will be a Tuesday and may be on the 21st September.

Names and money next week if possible for the Inter Region Bowling on the 26th September, or please let me know that you can make the day but not to MAG.

E-MAIL'S

More madness on the horizon – keeping big brothers hand off your throttle

Over many years, MAG and riders' representative groups throughout Europe have lobbied the European Parliament on issues such as; the 100bhp limit, threats to the right to modify your bike and other aspects of 'Type-Approval'. As reported before in Network, the Parliament is making way for panels of unelected international experts to make decisions on all our behalf. Consequently, the European Commission is due to publish its proposals to remove an important aspect of Euro control over motorcycling from any kind of democratic control.

The Europe-wide super-MoT (see above) is a vital component in this plan, as it would allow member states to check to see if anyone had found a way around 'anti-tampering' devices that are likely to prevent many of the things we can currently do to improve, customise or tune our bikes to our needs - even home-servicing work is under threat.

But there are even more scary technologies in prospect, some of which could find their way on to bikes more easily as a result of the Euro Parliamentarians' abandonment of its responsibility in matters of vehicle construction and use.

External control of vehicles is one such technology. Systems already exist to assist cars and larger vehicles from driving too close to each other, straying into another lane, warn of imminent collision and so on. As we have reported before, there have been experiments in the UK to remotely control the throttle of a motorcycle in order to enforce speed limits. So far, we have been able to keep these devices from being put on the road, but there are extensive trials of such devices fitted on cars such as the GPS-based system being tried by Transport for London.

The prospect of having a computer telling your bike to slow down mid-bend is something no rider is likely to welcome. But there are plenty of people in a position to influence future roads policy who believe that this sort of approach to road safety can be viable. The big question is whether it is desirable or sensible to use on public roads where people should be looking out for each rather than mentally switching-off because an artificial brain is taking decisions instead. So far, we've been winning that argument in Europe and with our own government. EU-funded researchers have concluded that no system should interfere with the riders' ability to use the throttle to balance a bike in motion. The Federation of European Motorcyclists Associations has been given a role to represent riders needs in the current research and is working to persuade the Commission and the project leaders against this sort of interference.

This quiet, behind the scenes stuff can only be done by a democratically organised representative body. But arguing for common-sense is only part of the job. There will come a time very shortly when we will need to take stock of the

research findings and use FEMA as a direct route in to the Commission to make sure it understands the consequences of making policy based on any one piece of research. It's a painstaking process of shaping policy makers' thinking, not letting them get carried away with the promise of technological fixes for every social ill.

Our biggest challenge lies in finding a way for bikes to operate independently of external control as national and international roads authorities start to talk about putting in the infrastructure to make it happen. This is creating huge commercial pressure for vehicle manufacturers to plan for a time when engine management equipment has to talk to the infrastructure of speed-control. Enormous investment is already being made outside of biking to develop this. This brings us back to the dangers of letting unelected world bodies shape the future of bike design. We might like to un-invent throttle-control technology but we can't, we could mount a mass-campaign to suppress further research or imminent findings but that just smacks of desperation. That leaves us to do what we do best; persuade the policymakers and safetycrats that it just doesn't make sense to take away control of the throttle, especially two-wheelers.

We have already had huge success in that area, built on an acceptance by the decision-makers that the riders' views are based on common-sense rather than looking like a knee-jerk fear of change. The riders' accumulated understanding, borne of long hours explaining how a bike works and what keeps it upright to non-biking technocrats, has been a hugely valuable resource in a long and drawn-out campaign.

In the meantime, there are more imminent concerns, not least opposing the move toward an EU super-MoT that would restrict us when we want to make modifications so our bikes to suit our needs and even home-servicing.

Latest on the Motorcycle Test Review (as at 13th August) from Paddy

I'd just like to thank you for taking the time to write to the Roads Safety Minister Mike Penning, with your suggestions for the motorcycle Test review.

He received a total of 482 responses to the consultation, 'mainly from motorcyclists'. The worrying thing is that people who don't ride took the time to respond! I wonder what they suggested, but it does demonstrate how important it is that we take responsibility and act for ourselves and our interests.

He says that the main points raised by the public were

- Too few test centres, too far apart
- Test booking system so bad it's almost impossible to retake test quickly
- One test preferable to two
- Swerve and stop manoeuvres should be separated
- 125's can't make the required speed
- allowance should be made for wet weather
- cost of the test is prohibitive

Rather worryingly some respondents said the off road test idea was good so that dangerous manoeuvres aren't carried out on the road, but one must ask first, why there are dangerous manoeuvres and second, isn't the road where we will be using our bikes?

Others said that with enough training the test can be passed, but with enough training anything can be passed. The point must surely be, do we want novices to pass an artificial test or improve the standard of their riding?

As the review continues, please be aware that MAG is at the centre of the process.

Nich Brown, MAG General Secretary is arguing for riders on the over-arching review panel, with the Dept for Transport, DSA, and training groups.

Paddy Tyson is doing the same on the Technical Sub-Group which is

Re-designing the test itself and assessing how the EU Directive can be interpreted to address the issues that have arisen.

Thanks again to every one of you who contacted the Minister.

Paddy Tyson. Campaigns Co-ordinator. MAG (UK) - Motorcycle Action Group

A.O.B

Cheryl: Product book is here.

Go karting to be booked soon

Colin: Basingstoke MAG'S trip to which was this months Road has been put on the web page of JtheB'S .

Meeting closed.

EVENTS:

September

10th-12th September: GWR RALLY Weston & North Somerset MAG. <http://north-somerset.mag-uk.org/gwr.html>

10th-12th September: NABD Rally.

18th September: Triumph Live. Mallory Park Kirkby Park Mallory Leicestershire.

26th September: Basingstoke MAG Inter Region Bowling Tournament. [The Bowlplex in Basingstoke.](#)

30th September: Milestones Museum Meet. 5pm – 9pm

October

28th October: Milestones Museum Meet. 5pm – 9pm

November

Carle Nash Bike Show, NEC 27th November-5th December. £15

December

18th December: Basingstoke MAG. Christmas Children's Run and Evening Party at the Royal Oak.

