

Motorcycle Action Group: National Committee Meeting

Date: December 14, 2013 Time 12.00 pm Venue: Shrewley Village Hall, CV35 7AN

1. Introduction and Register of Interests

JW thanked all for attending. All attendees introduced themselves.

2. Apologies for absence:

Recorded on attached attendance sheet.

3. Adoption of NC agenda:

Adopted with following revisions: item 10 to follow item 5; item 11 to follow item 6.

4. Ratification of previous NC Minutes:

Proposed: AC; Seconded: JB. Carried.

5. Matters arising from previous Minutes:

WR reported that following a rewrite by JC of an article and letter regarding the issue of E10 ethanol in petrol, introduction of E10 has now been postponed until 2017 so is no longer a current campaign.

Item 10: MAG LTD company status

Discussed and recorded under Confidential.

6. Board meeting report:

SL reported that all Directors were present with the exception of JMC (apologies received) and confirmed the new appointments of LÖ to the position of Director of Communications & Public Affairs (employee) and of LM to the position of Campaigns & Policy Advisor (contractor).

Membership is down by just over 500 on this time last year, but Direct Debits are working well.

Central Office is running well with all employees happy. Ideas for new accommodation are being explored.

IM requested ideas to increase advertising revenue.

LM provided a report via email; LÖ provided a report.

Julie Sperling has requested that, ideally, all information, requests, etc should go to Central Office to be disseminated to relevant personnel.

LM and LÖ gave a synopsis of their roles, confirming that they work well together on parallel levels of communication and that the new roles will fit it with work that is already being done.

LÖ briefly noted a number of items that would be covered in more depth at the NC meeting.

(AC noted that MAG finds itself at risk of finding itself engaging with the 21st century!!)

7. Appointments and Resignations:

Lembit Öpik appointed as Director of Communications & Public Affairs.

Leon Mannings appointed as Campaigns & Policy Advisor.

Dave Wigham appointed as North East regional rep.

Mick Southgate appointed as Herts & Essex regional rep.

Several regional reps reappointed to their positions.

Item 11: Right2Ride – a new relationship between MAG and TB

JW noted that this item is about looking forward and building bridges and asked that all give TB a fair hearing. TB invited to join the meeting.

TB thanked all for the invitation to attend and noted that he “never thought I’d be standing here again”. He then gave a brief outline of his previous involvement with MAG and the circumstances that lead to the formation of Right2Ride (R2R).

He continued by advising that at this time he had “reached out a hand to MAG” but that it had been “slapped away”. He stated that the relationship was not good at this time but that it was in respect to personal matters rather than MAG as an organisation.

TB then went on to explain that he is still passionate about MAG and that he saw information being circulated regarding potential EU legislation that was not true.

NFL interjected at this point to note that he and PvA had received unprompted comments from experienced activists in Europe regarding the excellence of TB’s research.

JB asked about the differing viewpoints regarding various EU restrictions but NFL stated that this was not the place for debate on these points and that the point of TB attending this meeting was to extend goodwill to MAG. He further suggested a corporate membership for R2R as a “way in”.

NFL suggested a proposal to render all cooperation and assistance to R2R with reciprocation.

TP stated that he had no issue with R2R being a corporate member of MAG but that it should not be a completely open book.

NFL responded that MAG needs accurate, valid research and that a free interchange of information was ideal.

IM said that he understood the issue of protecting intellectual rights but that MAG is in the business of communicating information.

LM used the example of Bikes in Buslanes to demonstrate that what matters is MAG optimising what it is able to do by communicating with people in the field and LÖ noted that the document put forward by him and LM discusses this.

PW noted that he had been asked by Den Powell to liaise with R2R following foolish and unprofessional social media references during 2012. TB concurred that these references were as described. PW continued that there is now an opportunity for collaboration and suggested that an honorary corporate membership be extended, pending ratification from AGC 2014.

DW said that he struggles to understand the Euro documents but that the message that had been coming from MAG was different to his own understanding, and therefore to have someone able to understand and interpret the documents accurately would be a good thing.

SL said that TB had approached MAG following the recent changes and that this, along with a new structure, was an ideal opportunity to move things forward with new relationships.

That NC welcomes a new dialogue with R2R and looks forward to collaboration in the future.

Proposed: AC; Seconded: IM. Carried.

Following a short break, the meeting reconvened with a suggestion from JW that TB remain in the meeting “in a spirit of Glasnost”. This was agreed.

8. Campaigns update:

LÖ noted that a document had been made available in Dropbox with details of a number of items for discussion and approval.

A brief outline and discussion of each item ensued with the following outcomes:

Redesign of MAG website:

Approval to proceed with web design for presentation to February 2014 NC meeting and to accept the Board’s recommendation of an £800 (eight hundred) spend.

Proposed: AC; Seconded: TC. Carried.

Joint working:

Approval to proceed, with regular reporting to Line Manager and, when deemed helpful, to the Board.

Proposed: NFL; Seconded: SW. Carried.

Promotional videos:

Approval to proceed with talks; final approval of any proposed arrangement to be presented to the Board through Line Manager or at next NC meeting.

Proposed: DH; Seconded: PT. Carried.

MAG anthem:

Approval to proceed with music producer with a view to securing an economical arrangement for use of the music, regardless of any chart success.

Proposed: NFL; Seconded: WR. Carried.

Policy agenda:

Approval to share a draft manifesto with the Board and NC at February NC meeting.

Proposed: SL; Seconded: AG. Carried.

Corporate and Club membership arrangements:

Approval to discuss the potential for renegotiating services and fees with a sample of clubs and corporate members.

Proposed: PT; Seconded: TC. Carried.

MotoGP, BSB WSB and off-road riding:

Approval to enter exploratory talks with key players in the motorcycle racing world; a report to the Board and NC by April 2014.

Proposed: TC; Seconded: DH. Carried.

MAG champions:

Authority to propose a scheme in time for its announcement at AGC in April 2014.

Agreed.

Anglo/US relations:

Approval for exploratory meeting, with a view to continuing these through telecommunications if initial talks are successful.

Proposed: AC; Seconded: TS. Carried.

Alliance Partners:

Wording for a mission statement to be distributed for feedback.

Agreed.

Miscellaneous:

Approval to proceed with routine reporting; important decisions being submitted to the Board.

Agreed.

9. FEMA:

NFL began his report by stating that the current salary bill is unsustainable.

(LM and LÖ leave the meeting).

NFL continued by explaining that work is being done to look at reconfiguring the offices to enable meetings to be held there, thereby reducing costs to both FEMA and its participants. He stated that the organisation needs to become more user-friendly and more focussed on riders' rights, and that the work being done to enable this to happen needs to be wrapped up as soon as possible.

Board elections are to be held in January.

(EL leaves the meeting).

12. AGC 2014:

Recommendation to return SW and TS as Directors for OldCo

Proposed: NFL; Seconded: AG. Carried.

AC suggested, and it was agreed, that the matter of awards be progressed via email and brought to February NC meeting.

Recommendation to approve AG to the post of Network & Communications for a further year.

Proposed: AG; Seconded: SL. Carried.

AC stated that Network should always be distributed via Central Office.

WR noted that too many awards were distributed at last year's AGC, which devalues them.

13. Reports:

i. Regional Reps

—
Warwickshire

Hi

Last min so not edited as received from my Group reps

- Di Doyle Rugby
- 2 Balls in Hand was a big success with approx 200 folk attending & raising approx £800 (see ROAD article)
- Quite a few of us went to Crossed Keys, Bedworth firework do, building on links built by Pete Flavel.
- 7 Rugby MAG members made up the majority attendance of a planning meeting on Tues 10th Dec for the proposed Rugby Bike Fest 2014. Following on from the success of bikes being parked in town during St Georges day celebration this year. The council have offered some funding for a bike event in 2014. Although funding has to be spent end March (maybe early April, Sun 6th if poss) Helping to organise this is Chris who organises Daventry motorbike fest. Stalls, bikes & bands proposed in town centre for the day. Rugby MAG will have a stand & help in any way poss. Could be a biggy for Rugby biking scene

DAVE FEAR Studley

Since taking over as local rep for the studley group in August, we have had a pretty quiet few months, as there does not seem to be much to report on the political side of things.

I would like to thank Paul Turner for taking the time to come and speak to the group for my first meeting as rep, giving me a much needed confidence boost!

Several members of the group helped out working on the MAG stand at the recent NEC bike show, and I would like to congratulate both Lembit Opik and Leon Mannings on their recent appointments. It certainly provided a talking point to the punters at the NEC.

On the 21st December we will be holding our xmas party at the Royal Oak, where we hold our meetings.

Looking forward, myself and Ollie, the vice rep, have been discussing where to hold our Fred Hill run, as the next one will be the 30th anniversary of his death, we would like to make it as big as possible, and have discussed organising on behalf of the region as well as the local group.

.

Coventry report on the day if not this evening

—

NW Report October-November 2013

11th October:- MAG UK Board The Falcon, Warwick.

I attended the Board meeting, minutes at www.mag-uk.org

12^th October: - National Committee meeting, Shrewley Village Hall

I attended the MAG NC meeting, minutes on www.mag-uk.org <<http://www.mag-uk.org>>

13^th October:- Hercules Charity Run Preesall-> Ravenglass

Once again I was asked to arrange the road marshalling of this event with the help of other NW MAG members and the Lancashire & Lakes Blood Bikes. It was an excellent day out, loads of money raised for the chosen charity which this year was Lancashire & Lakes Blood Bikes. Good PR for MAG and also good to work with the BB team and building a good working relationship. Also signed up one of the Blood Bike Riders.

30^th October: NW Motorcycle Alliance Meeting, British Bulldogs MCC.

It was a well attended meeting on a very wet evening. Jimmy, the Manchester MAG Rep has acquired the street sign from the street that Frank Gallagher use to live on in the Shameless TV set. The NWMA are auctioning it off next year, proceeds to be split Blood Bikes and NABD.

31^st October: Launch of Salford Area MAG,

It was a good turnout for the launch of the new group in the Salford Area and I would like to think that this has come about by associations made within the NW Alliance meetings. Steve "Blayz" Blay ran the meeting well and the majority of attendees were from the local area so hopefully this group will continue to get good attendance.

2^nd November: Blackpool MAG Bonfire & Halloween Party.

Atrocious weather conditions but still the people came to party. It was an excellent performance on stage by Massive Wagons. There were loads of great fancy dress costumes. The bonfire was lit but we had to put it out as the winds were too strong and the fireworks were a nightmare to set off. Raised a couple of hundred quid for the MAG coffers

24th November NW MAG AGM

All the usual suspects re-elected apart from NW Sectary Gillian Beautyman who stood down and Gayle Gibson stood forward. The meeting was observed by Neil Liversidge and it was a good turnout with plenty of discussion. NW funds are doing well with over a grand profit having been made through the sale of products through the year, mainly 40th Anniversary T-shirts and patches.

27th November NW Alliance meeting, Broadfield Arms, Leyland

Another very well attended meeting at the the home of Millenium 2000 BC. It is good to see the majority of MCs and MCCs from the NW working together to support each others events

Other news from around the region

It's been a busy few months. It is great to have a new group starting up in the Salford area and hope to support as much as I can. Very busy at work and have very limited spare time but trying to keep up with MAG commitments. T-shirts and patches still selling well and a fresh stock ready for the G-Mex Bike show in January. We have done a contra deal again this year with the show organisers and have a FOC 6x6m pitch and the MAG logo on the show flyers in exchange for publicising the events around the region.

The NW Motorcycle Alliance goes from strength to strength and it is great for the clubs in the region who participate.

Tony Cox

—

Southern Region MAG Round up.

After a couple of local Group AGMs, in October, I am delighted to say that I was re-elected and the Regional team remains with the addition of a new Secretary (Anna, cc'ed) after our Regional AGM in November, which was overseen by Trace and bolstered by members of EDMAD Although there has been a general slowdown of activity across the Region, *The New Forest MAG* continues to grow in popularity with various meetings and rideouts, in preparation for a formal launch next year, in the better weather.

Salisbury MAG hosted the second of our local Regional activist Think Tank, which has allowed the Regional Team and interested members to get together to discuss various aspects and how to approach different issues. Salisbury MAG continue to maintain the pressure on the local council to fulfil their commitment to provide additional secure bike parking, as part of a city centre redevelopment, however the requirement for bus stops, due to the bus station being redeveloped has meant that the priority has slipped.

Salisbury MAG's Spring Surprise is likely to take a different format next year, due to a number of reasons, however through the ongoing relationship with the Council over the Bike Parking, the City Council are keen for Salisbury to host the bike show in the City Centre, similar to Calne. This will prove an interesting and has the potential to create massive positive impact.

Winchester MAG continues to struggle with very low membership in attendance, however is upbeat and keen to advance the proposal to host the 2015 AGC at Winchester Rugby Club.

Southampton MAG members have been very fired up after their AGM and members of the Group continue to ensure the MAG represented at many types of events. *Southampton MAG* are hosting their Bike Show on 8th June.

Basingstoke MAG continues to be a concern and a Group we need to support heavily in 2014. Numbers are declining and we are challenged why and how to reinvigorate the Group.

Portsmouth MAG thrives. Members of the Group have formed a very close knit group and the diversity and friendships that have been struck impact positively on this.

IOW MAG continues to move forwards and engage closely with RBLR, although things are quiet at the moment they continue to plan a busy calendar for 2014, to include Wightona and Absent Friends.

The ongoing discussions with the County Council are beginning to pay dividends; MAG have been invited to attend the County Council's Safety Council Meetings to represent motorcyclists, in the same way that cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders are. Whilst we are under no illusions that we aren't a "safety" organisation, we are being engaged as a serious user group. This has shown impact recently on a local issue where John Baker (Dep Rep) responded to a consultation regarding traffic calming measures near where he lives. To summarise a long process; we were able to engage with various individuals and engineers within the Council and this culminated in the local councillor; Seán Woodward, who hasn't been particularly bike friendly and who is also an Executive Member for Economy, Transport & Environment in Hampshire riding pillion with John and listening to aspects that have been presented and indicating his agreement that, from the motorcyclists perspective, the proposals were not suitable. *This will be reported to the Region, next week, but it's great work by John and we continue to move forwards.*

Cumbria

Not a lot to report this time round.

We had the charity Run on the 17th November which went down well loads collected and given out to the local charities, mainly food for the Christmas Hampers that Age UK put together and pet food for the animal rescue centre.

The usual MAG meal has been held just last night which appears to have been a success, I didn't go for various reasons.

Furness are well on the way with plans for the next Dead End Rally

The "new" venue for the Whitehaven Group has gone down well. I am hoping in the new year to get a bit more done as RR as it's been a strange few months.

See you all on Saturday

East Anglia

My report will be brief.

I have seen many of the Bury St Edmunds MAG group, I visited the Copdock show near Ipswich where they had a MAG stand.

They have lost their Local Rep Jo, she found it difficult to juggle with the rest of her life.

Simon (Mollett) the Deputy has taken on the role. Their AGM is April but before then they have their January rally.

I did all the arranging for the West Norfolk MAG group. They now have a new Local Rep in Pete (my husband).

They are making plans to attend a range of events next year.

I've been to see my MP about the state of the main road in to my village and it continues to be something I need to work on as the responses from the local council (arrived yesterday date stamped 20/11/2013) are unacceptable. I need to find out about the rating system that decides when a road gets allocated a budget for works. If anyone knows about such things please enlighten me.

I observer for Eastern Regions AGM.

I attended Yorkshire and MAP's AGMs just as a spectator.

My Director role continues to keep me busy (I was involved in the second interviews).

There was lots of planning up to the last NC to get the pictures we need for the Christmas campaign now showing on Facebook.

Tracy & I would love to keep fresh ideas going on promoting MAG membership (we also came up with the Fathers Day one earlier in the year), please all feed in and get involved in promoting MAG Membership as a gift.

I am quiet on the email due to email issues (I should change providers but it seems such a ball ache to do so) and being busy at work which means that although I read the emails I rarely remember to respond to them.

Selina

RR East Anglia

West Midlands

Hello all

nearing the end of 2013 but already planning ahead for 2014 but then again our 1st rally is set for February.. Burton MAGs Frozen Pancake rally although fairly new should build on a hopeful start in 2011 and could prove a popular regular event early in the rally season. Meetings with Burton's rep (and the other local reps) led to the donation of £25 from the affiliated club up there. Setting in motion the plans for trying to raise MAG in the public image especially around Birmingham and encourage membership across the board.

Wishing you all a very merry Christmas and a wonderful 2014

Eddie

Yorkshire

It is with sadness that I start my report with the death of Vanessa Johnstone (Band organiser for the Yorkshire rallies) and all round top lady, tomorrow (10th December) we will be celebrating her life with Biffa Bob Tribute day (all the ladies will be wearing moustaches). At our Yorkshire AGM, I was re-elected as Regional Rep, thanks to Tracy Smith (observer) and Paul Turner (who I snaffled into being chair), I am pleased to report that we have retained the regional committee.

The local groups are pretty quiet at present, this is always the case after all the effort that goes into the Yorkshire rallies, time to recharge the batteries, however as with most groups around the country they still have local events on, raising money and awareness of MAG, like the Wakefield quiz, which is in its tenth year. Sheffield and Rotherham held their AGM and Oliver Rose (interested in the national clubs role, hence my request for a job description) was re-elected as local rep, .

Leeds are still pushing for bus lane access with the help of Leon.

I and several others from my region helped man the MAG stall at NEC and while he is from my region, I haven't included Neil Stevenson in my several.

Wayne Rooney

—

South West

Our regional AGM took place in Plymouth on Nov 2. I was re-elected as RR. Our returning committee has grown by one products officer. Plans were made an ideas discussed for the coming year. Many thanks to Phil McFadden who was our observor. Plymouths MAGoween party at the same venue in the evening was well attended - it was a good end to the day of the AGM

An unfortunate event at an Exeter MAG meeting has led me to remove their political officer from the post. I took advice and referred to the constitution and group rules. The incident may well have cost us the Exeter Rep as a result of the other partys behaviour. Unfortunately although we had managed to persuade the rep back he has started a new job on permanent nights. Luckily they have a dep rep who will fill in. The groups meeting at the start of December was a little quieter than normal but it went well and we have 2 people to share the political work and one new dep rep t vote in at the January meeting

North Devon MAG older members were recently out numbered by the younger ones. They are making plans for the coming years bike nights. The Mid Devon rep is coordinating the Devon groups on meetings with the Devon County highways, the Devon road safety officer and their appropriate parties in a Devon campaign for better road surfaces. The plan being that while we want them to understand our issues with the roads we are also out to learn a bit more about what they can/do do etc

Cornwall and Plymouth are making plans to grow MAG in Cornwall. Plans are afoot to look for hotspots and possible venues in the new year (holidays abroad causing the delay) Our new R Dep Rep is hoping to revitalise Bridgewater but they may well amalgamate with Taunton in the new year.

I attended the Southern AGM as observer along with a couple of my region from the nearest group to Southern with a view to see how another region operated and perhaps learn a bit from them. All went well and Tim Peregrine was re-elected.

We had a meeting in Mid Devon with a Devon Highways representative to discuss motorcyclists concerns with the road conditions in our region. We were given a presentation on what they do, how and how much etc. We were listened to and came up with various points that while obvious to us as vulnerable road users were not points that were being considered. Further meetings are being set up with the actual subcontractors and a Traffic Police Officer, A Senior DCC Highways Councillor has also agreed to speak at a meeting. These meetings are about getting these people/groups/organisations on our side and give them a bigger understanding of riders issues.

I attended a committee meeting of the Barnstaple detachment of the Royal British Legion with a view to include local riders in the 2014 Remembrance parade. They dont have a local riders group so we are hoping to co-ordinate a ride as part of the parade. Exeter MAG had a brill xmas

party which was well supported. As we head into the winter we will see our rural groups attendances drop as is usual for this time of year.

Trace

Tracy Smith

Herts & Essex regional report, December 2013.
Apologies for late submission.

Having been "on the road" in Europe for more than 2 months, with a succession of problems, I have not achieved what I had hoped for during this period.

The following is based on memory and archived e-mails where available. Hemel Hempstead branch Ticking over, but quiet. One staunch member is taking a prolonged absence. Chelmsford branch. `Nothing to report. Colchester branch December 3rd - I fulfilled my ambition to visit all of the branches in my region.

Turnout, 8-10 people, was greater than the branch rep is accustomed to. If he follows through his intention to stand down at AGM in February, somebody else stated that they would stand. Action item: make contact with both and follow through. December 21st - charity street collection for Stepping Stones. Meet 10:00 at Bungalow Café (Marks Tey?) for 10:30 departure. Parking issue in Colchester for the event to be resolved.

December 27th - post-Xmas drinks at Victoria Inn, 20:00. Replaces "Stuff the Turkey" event.

February 4th, 2014 - branch AGM.

Possible agenda item - re-launch as Colchester and District MAG, or North-East Essex MAG and/or Tendring MAG.

Southend prospective branch

Nothing recent to report.

Action items:

Regional web-site - planning stage.

Regional Farcepuke page - planning stage.

Discover/recruit a regional committee

Canvas more biker friendly establishments, e. g. café

/shop in Walton-on-Naze.

Find funds/transport to attend NC meeting December 14th.

Eastern Region Report:

Our AGM was held on 23rd November in Gladstone Working Mens Club, Finedon. In attendance were members from Peterborough, Towcester, Rushden and District and Bedford. Selina Lavender, east Anglian regional rep as Observer Election of regional officers; Selina opened the election process by thanking Neil Daniel as outgoing regional rep, he had resigned from the post a few weeks earlier and I had stood in as the deputy regional rep. Neil had been regional rep for 3 years and it was outlined how difficult it could be balancing the work/life/MAG balance. Neil identified that this ended a 9 year run as a local or regional officer.

Regional representative:

I was nominated as the new regional rep with a proposal by Michael Egerton. This was seconded by Paul Ayres. No other nominations were made. I was voted into the office of regional rep unanimously. Deputy regional representative: Michael Egerton (Peterborough MAG) was proposed by Paul Ayers and seconded by Tink Hammond. No other nominations were made. The vote was carried unanimously.

Regional secretary:

Stephen Loft (Towcester MAG) was proposed by Nick Meads and seconded by Jan Meads. There were no other nominations. The vote was carried unanimously.

Regional Meetings; These will take place 2 weeks after NC meetings to disseminate the NC meeting results down to the regional group reps and then to the group members.

Towcester MAG: –

As a result of problems within the group necessitating an EGM there has been a change of officers. Financial reports have not been forthcoming from the previous treasurer. The matter is in hand with contact from the new rep, Lofty, communicating with the outgoing rep and treasurer, Gemma and Barry Farnan respectively.

Rushden and District MAG: –

The group have been involved in several local events promoting the MAG values and ethos in an attempt to recruit new members.

Bedfordshire MAG :-

Have yet to have their first AGM, I will be seeing what help they need

Peterborough MAG:-

The end of October saw Jay of Bikes Trikes n Stuff join as a Corporate Member with Neil of Wheels following suit beginning of November. The 6th Rock Night raised £218.91 and along with our 1st Xmas run of the year seeing another £73.00 for the fighting fund via donations. £237.29 was raised for the Wood Green Animal Shelter via MAG members having a local charity stall on the market. New & renewal memberships are still being taken at meets & rideouts. Peterborough MAG are still busy reporting road sweeps requests, pothole and surface repair requests to PCC, The strangest one was a request to PCC to move the grit bin that was blocking the security rail in the M/C Parking in one of the Peterborough City Council car parks that PCC had placed there themselves. The M/C parking was finally finished in Bridge St, though communication with PCC still carries on as cyclists seem to like it better than their parking. Talks are still ongoing with the Huntingdon Tesco store re the m/c parking, along with Anglian Water re composite covers in Church St and PCC with M/C parking signage & the use of the bus lane. Rep/RR are attending area resident and area police meetings to deal with the issue of parking on grass verges & what can be done to keep mud off the roads. Meetings are still fortnightly with an average attendance of 15. MAG member benefit only ride outs have been introduced.

South Wales:

I DROVE to the October NC meeting with the newly elected Aber MAG Rep/Chairman, Steve Bailey-John (who attended NC as an Observer -this is open to anyone who a local group nominates, though spaces are limited). We enjoyed the journey and opportunity to get to know each other better and discuss our ideas for MAG.

Early in November I attended as MAG Official Observer to the S.West AGM in Plymouth, enjoying Tracy & Doug's hospitality the night before, and Pete & Anna's following the MAGoween party. Mammoth winter ride, much enjoyed, and great to see the way another region is run -I hope Wales will benefit -but wouldn't've been possible without that support.

Similar hospitality was afforded me by Medwyn and Madeleine, who let me sleep on a mattress on their pool table so that I could join Aber MAG during their day of supporting Bruiser at the NEC show for one day, last week.

I've put in a miniscule amount of help with Barrie Avery and Martin SPAM Wylie's consolidation of their redoubtable work, with MAG's written response to the Local Development Plans in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. This will hopefully gain bikes access to bus lanes and good free parking across the County.

My concern is that once again a few MAG members work hard, achieve much, and as usual (while we may get a brief credit) we won't get new members out of it.

-Perhaps we could have a MAG Celebration Run?

-Speaking of which, we're planning our next Annual Fred Hill convergence for the second Sunday of February. So far we think that this will be on Llandovery again, so that all the local groups have similar lengths of journey. I hope the weather's an improvement on last year's...

Immediately following the December NC meeting I should be heading back to the South Wales valley town of Aberdare, where the affiliated club Aberdare MCTC plans to present me a large cheque of money raised for MAG at their Summer annual Sheep Alley Rally. Great end to the year!

Ride safe, ride free, and don't let grammar obsessives get you down.

Phil

South East Region Report

This past couple of months have been quiet for the region. Apart from Wil Humphrey from Brighton who has managed to organise a couple of good events. November 10th saw £400 raised for the Royal British Legion on the remembrance day run. Newhaven fort opened especially for the event and the Route 23 Cafe is becoming a staunch ally. There were about 90 bikes and scooters in attendance (including a rather late SE Rep who had spent the day before at central – ... more on that later – leading the run from Lewes). The weather was fantastic and this should hopefully be a regular event. Wil's been co-opted to run the major rideouts for the region. He puts a sterling amount of effort in and would make a good rep in the future.

The rest of the meetings are just ticking over, which isn't ideal, so it has been pointed out that now we've had a successful rally, we need to keep the momentum up – and we have to raise £2,000 to cover our costs and that's before the increase in rent from the venue (their farm rent has been shunted up quite heavily). The local reps have started organising events for next year. The venue are really pleased to have us back as people must have spent a few quid on their cider – which is a good thing.

There have been a couple of changes to the region committee – Paul Dore is concentrating solely on clubs for MAG and Tony Wall has stepped up to fill the membership secretary's role.

Brighton and Hove Council has had a review of the bus lane trial – results will be posted shortly. So far, there have been no casualties and no hassle, so the scheme should be expanding soon. The Council has let us down on some points – the information campaign they planned didn't happen – though maybe that's down to our resistance of wearing hi-vis and no-longer marshalling their events for nothing...

JM

North East Regional Report -- December

This will have to be brief due to work pressures at moment.

The new NE Regional committee had its first meeting at my house.

The new comm is made up of;
Dave Wigham Reg Rep / Durham Rep
Gordon Finney Dep Rep
Greg Philipson Treasurer and web guru
Jim Coxon Dep treasurer
Lix Coxon mem rep
Claire Brennan Sec
Tony Reay Blyth rep
Richard Hind Darlington Rep
John Milburn

John Milburn was co-opted onto the Reg Com as Dealer Liaison because he had started to go round all the regional dealers asking for MAG discount and advertising in return for advertising on our Reg Web site. He also knows everybody and is very useful for contacts.

The new NE web site is up and running and steadily being populated.

Campaigns

The regional has pushed members to write to the Ministry of Justice re Jade Clark.

The Humps campaign has resulted in the Highways dept agreeing to remove offending hump.

The Bikes into Bus Lanes has taken an unexpected step with the powers that be switching to a non-car type bus lane, Durham are working with the Council on this one. Blyth have had a couple of very successful charity events are slowly coming round to a more political point of view, they are over the moon to see their Diesel Spills campaign with the local Metro Transport organisation in the Road. Blyth has also changed venues, details on main MAG web page and local web page. Blyth are currently heavily involved in organising their Easter run.

Durham MAG and Regional MAG are now exploring money making ideas for the forthcoming year. These include a small NE rally, cards, pies! Durham has decided to choose a single charity to support, SSAFA, a large number of Durham members are ex forces and the children of forces families. SSAFA was chosen because it can be supported with minimum effort from the group.

Durham AGM has been announced for February, details on MAG web sites and in ROAD. I will be standing down as Durham local rep at the AGM as being Reg Rep and Durham Rep has a potential accusation of conflict of interest. A new gazebo has been sourced by Neil Stevenson and paid for by Stormin. The gazebo is key to next year's plans.

Thank you.

Dave Wigham NE Reg Rep.

ii. *Chair and Vice-Chair*

Chairman's Report

It's been nice to have a busy couple of months with my work, as well as undertaking my Chairman's duties; including time spent at central interviewing our new staff. I am really pleased with the appointment of Lembit Öpik and Leon Mannings (on a proper footing). Trying to time the appointment news release with the NEC show proved interesting, though thanks to the joys of the internet, I was able to post the launch release while at a cafe in Seaford before heading off to London. Thanks to Tracy Smith for bolstering the release with photos of Lembit, etc.

On the day I wrote my last report, I was on my way home from the NE EGM in Durham. Since then, the North East looks like it's flying. Dave has stepped up really well.

I'm looking forward to the future for MAG, which is all I can ask for at this time.

John

iii. *National Finance Officer*

Report at end.

iv. *General Secretary (temporary)*

Decision made to remove item following new appointments.

v. *Contractors*

Leon/Lembit's report attached at the end

Mutch report:

Another issue of the ROAD has gone to bed as I write this and today I have ticked off more must dos from my list of things to do than I have for weeks and from this I learn a lesson I wish to share with you.

You have a list of things that need doing many of which may not take that much effort but you keep putting them off because there is one overriding consideration and you say when that is done I will do all these other things. With me it is the magazine. I must finish the magazine I must I must I must and so things like I must put that venetian blind up or I must book myself a dental appointment because that filling fell out or I must call the plumber to come and fix the leak in the central heating that is dripping through my living room ceiling - these things all get put off . They live on the list of things to do and every time you look at that list it bugs you and worse still, it grows longer. The accumulation of things on the list becomes like an increasing weight in a rucksack on your back and it gets heavier and heavier and fills you with a sense of continually being behind the curve and it can start to get you down.

Then you finish the big thing and you turn to the list with a big sigh and you find that many of these things take virtually no effort at all. In less than a day you reduce the list to almost nothing and now the rucksack feels much lighter and you feel more positive.

You say to yourself – how could I not find time to do these things before, this is quite ridiculous. It is quite ridiculous. I did have time to screw the little cleat to the window frame that the venetian blind cord can be turned up around when the blind is open. This avoids the irritation and awkwardness of coiling the cord down on to the window ledge like an anaconda every morning. Screwing the cleat up took about three minutes and now a source of irritation is removed from my life. Ordering a beard and hair trimmer took a bit longer but no more than 15 minutes and now it has arrived. Bruiser thought my hair was looking a bit unkempt when I turned up at the NEC and we can't have that. I should have ordered it earlier.

Now I did manage to buy a little metal barrel to put Jack's name and address in for hanging off his collar but what have I done with it?

I must also find the time to book him in for dog training. He jumped on the dinner table tonight and pinched the remains of the pheasant casserole that I was saving for the beast. I did not teach him to do that . The last thing you need late in the evening is a hungry grizzly at your door and you with little to feed it but an explanation and a happy looking dog.

I hope this has been helpful ..

More - going forward - that's the new expression don't you know. Going forward one of my plans for The ROAD is to run a series of interviews or features on unusual members with an emphasis on high achievers to elevate the perception of MAG as an organisation for winners. Step forward Gary France.

I reviewed his travel picture book 'France in America' an issue or two back, it's a monstrous tome that you could knock a burglar out with, more of a personal project for amusement than a business idea. It certainly has high production values. Gary was a director of a project management company that he built up from 9 staff back in 1990 to 3500 when he sold his interest in it a couple of years ago. Gary went with the British team to Singapore to argue London's case for hosting the Olympics having had the contract to work out all the project management for the whole sheebang of building the Olympic Park etc. More of him in the next issue. I met him in St Tropez the year before last when one of his bikes was in the custom show. Anyway he came here to spend a couple of days at Mutch's country seat so I could interview him for The ROAD and see if he had any ideas about promoting MAG. We haven't come up with any magic bullets yet but I think he will be a useful connection and a very decent unassuming sort of chap too.

I have done very little MAGwise outside of The ROAD lately. Night riding on the bike is totally out now as I simply become a hazard. Ludicrous delays with this eye operation milarky but things seem to be moving again and I am due to see a surgeon for an assessment in Mid January. Will probably buy a car for the first time in my life shortly. I have more use for it here than in London and the night vision issue is not quite so bad as when on the bike though still pretty grim. Maybe I just worry about it less as it's easier to suddenly correct your course in a car on a bendy road than on a bike; partly sychological I reckon. phycological?

I think this issue of The ROAD is going to be rather wonderful with the dramatic news on the cover about Lembit's appointment and some stuff that I think is pretty interesting on Austin Vince and Lembit and Nick Sanders. Also have a two page review of a Royal Enfield by former BMF Chairman now

MAG member Bruce Preston. I'm thinking that might raise a few eyebrows. Bruce was a mainstay of the BMF for many years dating right back before the helmet law. I think he accepts that MAG is now the only legitimate voice of the British rider, a message that I hope his contribution will implicitly telegraph.

You'll notice a font change in this issue from Times 9 pt to Helvetica light 10. It wasn't my idea but I like it and I think it will make the magazine an easier read, a bit less academic. I may have mentioned before that my lifestyle guru/ gym trainer Rupert Louis Le Dacre took a look at it and said 'you're giving the readers too much'. One side of me says I have to pack loads of stuff in and people should read what is important and the more pragmatic commercial side of my brain says, this is the way things are with the magazine world. Don't worry it's still a million miles from Hello magazine.

What it does mean is that the need to trim word counts on some stuff is greater. It's something you might want to think about and pass on to anyone writing rally / regional reports on things. Lines like 'the field began to fill up with tents as people erected them before wandering into the marquee for a beer or six to chat with old friends and meet new ones.' can probably be cut back a bit. Actually I do tend to prune most of this blindingly obvious stuff or regions would already be filling half the magazine. Ditto pictures of people sitting around a table with their backs to the camera - generally of limited interest to be cruelly honest. It would be good to get a bit more politically orientated regional material really.

On the subject of content I am constantly trying to balance the expectation that rally style material will feature in the mag with the criticism that it pigeon holes MAG as a bunch of 'drunks in fields.' I am painting with a broad brush here but I am sure we all know what I mean.

I want MAG to look like a fun organisation to be a part of and I don't want us to be all prissy PC with loads of those star symbols I don't know how to make, every time someone writes the word 'bugger.' That said, if event reports focus on how off their faces everyone got then it gets a bit boring and doesn't portray MAG in a very good light.

I haven't read BSH for a while but it used to consistently feature rally reviews that lacked any detail about the proceedings that might inform possible patrons, as the staff writers were so off their faces they couldn't remember much. There used to be a presumption that this kind of indulgence is always funny and what biking is all about. For many, that presumption persists but when that kind of lifestyle focus becomes the norm, it caricatures the participants in a negative way that is bound to alienate a lot of people. I'm conscious that we make a lot of money helping people to get off their faces so I have to constantly juggle these considerations. Sometimes it means cutting the text all about 'a couple of beers or ten!!!' sometimes it means cropping a picture in which everyone is surgically attached to beer cans during what is clearly the middle of the afternoon. By the way, nearly all exclamation marks get axed from copy as they are so often as tiresome and unnecessary as the over-used word 'basically.'

I set this down to hopefully give you an idea of my thinking with the magazine and maybe inspire a little discussion.

Speaking of BSH we have the dramatic news of the departure of Stu and Blue. I can't pretend to be upset, as between them they have probably done me

more harm than anyone in my life, albeit passively by exiling me from the magazine that gave me my break into journalism 30 years ago and that I used to contribute so much to. So much for that. I have exercised superhuman restraint in thanking stu for his support of MAG within BSH and wished Blue well with 100% this is because I am such a wonderfully generous spirited fellow/two faced git - delete as applicable.

Speaking of publications, MCN continues with its policy of having no political news at all which is no great help to us. I managed to hang a letter on the back of a letter to their legal advice section last week and that has been printed today. It concerns the attempt by insurance companies to cut compensation to riders not wearing the right kit.

I also notice in today's paper that the editor mentions Lembit Opik being at the show but not that he is now working for MAG. Not a single line in the whole paper. Speaking of the size of MCN and signs of the times. Just look at it today compared to how it was a few years ago. I'd say it isn't much more than half its size and most of that extra acreage of paper was advertising. Such is the problem with paper publishing. I still like holding a paper magazine in my hands but the advertisers clearly aren't getting the same response they now get from on line alternatives. I also think that IT has enabled them to more easily quantify the response that their various advertising avenues earn them and so they are less likely to buy ad space on a speculative or trusting basis.

Advertising in The ROAD is a quarter of what it was a few years ago in monetary terms and our best hope of improving that lies as always with a dramatically increased membership. Either that or good will advertising from wealthy corporate members who value what we do for motorcycling. The problem there is that even if you have a company MD sympathetic to MAG he may have an agency deal with his advertising budget and you run into a stone wall of pragmatists who only look at numbers. If we could truly engage the industry and make them believe that they need us then maybe we could get some heavyweights overrule their ad agencies and just tell them, look we are booking full pages in The ROAD for the next year – end of. From their point of view it is probably a better way of fuelling us than just handing over money and it's better from our perspective too.

I thought I was supposed to be at the show for a photocall involving Lembit fairly early on Monday so I booked myself into the Premier Inn at the NEC Sunday night. There's no railway connection to Glastonbury so journeys from here by public transport tend to be a tad tortuous.

I was subsequently baffled to find out that the real photocall and press release had gone out on Saturday which I guess I sort of knew by then and my presence on the following Monday was a little after the event. I guess I'll foot the bill for my hotel and rail ticket which is naturally yet another case of three cheers for

I'm glad I went to the show anyway as I gathered some good material for a two page feature on it which was handy as I was low on strong news stories. I expect that problem will evaporate now that we have a proper political team in harness again but the dearth of European stories remains. There are just no pithy news items on the FEMA website that are genuinely news as opposed to lengthy academic updates of unending political processes. I don't believe that those pithy stories are not out there but they don't seem to find their way on to the FEMA website so I remain very US-based on the overseas front.

Right we're on with the next issue now - I mentioned the Gary France stuff.
If anyone has any ideas please send them my way. Again my plan is to get all
the non time sensitive features done early.

MR M

(LÖ rejoins the meeting)

14. Any other business:

i. The Road

Item not covered as PM not present.

ii. Herts/Essex AGM

MS reported that as there had been no observer available for the AGM his appointment as regional rep is not constitutional.

Move to grant relief in extenuating circumstances and appointment to stand.

Proposed: NFL; Seconded SW. Carried.

iii. Vote of thanks

A vote of thanks to Paul Turner for sterling work at Central Office during a difficult transitional phase.

Date of next meeting: Saturday 8th February 2014.