

MAG IS DEAD; LONG LIVE MAG

The organisation known as MAG (UK) Ltd is no more. Don't worry folks, MAG is still here fighting for the right of everyone to ride a bike/scooter/trike/1942 BMW sidecar unit with machine-gun mount/whatever and the situation isn't anywhere near as bad as you may have read on certain websites.

The simple fact is that we've had to update our company to make it compliant with the Companies Act 2006, which, considering that MAG (UK) Ltd was incorporated back in 1992, it wasn't. It's only taken us eight years. Ho hum...

Anyway, those who turned up to the MAG AGM in Blackpool at the beginning of April gave the Board of the new company the democratic support that it required to make the necessary changes. MAG is, of course, still the same MAG you know and love; however, the company that runs it is now The Motorcycle Action Group Ltd with the old assets and trademarks (logos) etc sold to the new company. The same status is in place, as in Company limited by Guarantee (not shares), so none of the members are liable for more than a quid. I'm still here - I was re-elected as National Chairman for another term and I'm also one of the elected Directors of the new company.

Anyone who has joined MAG recently won't be affected, and everyone else will have their

membership transferred over to the new company on renewal (likewise, life members in good standing should also have had their memberships transferred over by now). As I say, MAG is still out there fighting for our rights, no matter where in the UK they may be in jeopardy.

One thing MAG knows that it has to sort out is the licensing regulations and all the relevant nonsense that goes with them. You may have noticed earlier that I mentioned a certain 1942 BMW bike and sidecar. That belongs to a friend of mine who is also the captain of the cricket team for which I play occasionally.

Last year, while messing around with the bike tests again, the government enacted what was supposed to be a 'notional directive' (meaning to be used at the discretion of member states) in full! So, when he got it out of the barn in which it had been languishing for years, he found he was unable to ride it on the road because he didn't have a bike licence - a few years ago, the law allowed you to ride a combination on a car licence. Now, consider this, if you roll up to a toll booth at the Dartford Crossing on a motorcycle and sidecar, you will be charged the same rate as a car. Likewise, while motorcycles are allowed in certain bus lanes, it's stated in the requisite legislation that, like a car, a combination is not - and yet it requires a bike licence. It seems a bit mad, to be honest.



Mitch (or John Mitchell, to give him his proper name) has been a member of MAG since 1999 and was elected as National Chairman in April this year. He's the proud owner of a Triumph Speed Triple, which he rides everywhere, and is a member of CAMRA who'd love MAG to have the same number of members. Here's hoping!

Anyway, by the time you read this, El Capitan should have done his Mod II (the on-road bit for all you 'elder statesmen' out there) after failing the Mod I the first time - due to going through the speedgun at 2 kph less than the required minimum speed (46 kph instead of 48 kph - yes, more euro-silliness) and will be bringing the beast out onto the road soon. Having seen said beastie at East Sussex Wheels To Work where it was having some work done, it is certainly eye-catching with its full kit, including trailer. And yes, he does have the (deactivated) machine gun to go with it and which he uses on WWII re-enactments, or so he tells me!

In April 2003, bikes became exempt from toll charges on the Dartford Crossing on the M25. This was down in part to a series of MAG protests, with riders turning up to the gates with twenty and fifty pound notes, and expecting change. Sure enough, the tactic paid off. The government has now announced plans to scrap the barriers on the crossing, implementing a similar charging system as in London for the Congestion Charge with online and telephone payments. The good news is, that bikes are definitely still exempt from charges. As we reported in the News pages last month, MAG has that assurance in writing from Robert Goodwill, Transport Minister.

MAG - the gift that keeps on giving!

THE MAG YOU SEE, IS OF COURSE STILL THE SAME MAG YOU KNOW AND LOVE; HOWEVER, THE COMPANY THAT RUNS IT IS NOW THE MOTORCYCLE ACTION GROUP LTD