

# The WRAG October 2011



## Western Region MAG

### Group AGM's

Below are when various groups are holding their respective AGM's, please remember to have your current (and valid) membership card with you when you attend an AGM otherwise you will be unable to vote.

**Mid-Wilts MAG** hold their AGM at 8:30pm in The Kingfisher, Hungerdown Lane, Chippenham on the 20<sup>th</sup> October.

**Weston & North Somerset MAG** hold their AGM at 8:30pm in The Railway Inn, Sandford on the 16<sup>th</sup> November.

**Bristol MAG** hold their AGM at 8:30pm in The Railway Tavern, Fishponds, Bristol on the 17<sup>th</sup> November.

### The Demo



Tens of thousands of bikers gathered at service areas around the country to ride along motorways and trunk roads in a Slow Protest at EU proposals. If implemented these proposals would mean, among other things, mandatory ABS on all machines of 125 and over, anti-temper measures to prevent modification of the drive train from air

filter to rear tyre, automatic headlight on. There are also concerns about the inaccessibility of test centres and French and Irish proposals to make the wearing of long sleeve hi-vis clothing compulsory.



Locally, hundreds of bikers met at Easton in Gordano services South of Bristol and rode along the M5, M4 and M32 into Bristol before dispersing. The high turn-out was particularly impressive in view of the wet weather, demonstrating the strength of feeling amongst motorcyclists' at interference with our freedom of choice from Brussels.

*Hugh Probert*

Mid Wilts run was a great success going by the comments we were hearing before and after the run.



There were already about 100 bikes at Leigh Delemare at 12 noon, and we counted the bikes and trikes as they joined the motorway, with over 460 taking part in the actual ride.

A Police traffic car blocked the first lane to allow all the bikes onto the motorway together.

This was a massive turnout for Wiltshire area, I just hope we get the publicity and effort it deserves.

*Andy Kerr.*

### After The Demo

As the dust begins to settle after the 25th, many things, including the results of our actions, are becoming clear.

First the good news?

Our original estimate of numbers may have been a little conservative it seems. After discussion with the various Police forces it appears that we had a larger turnout than even we first thought, which is definitely a record. I'm certainly not aware of any simultaneous mobilisation of riders for a political cause ever happening before on this scale.

It did mean that many of the Police Forces were caught a little off guard, but their co-operation was generally excellent and feedback from many forces has been positive, especially where the runs managed to keep left, which also provided a much better spectacle for the cameras and assisting motorists who could marvel at the numbers and discipline.

In those areas particularly, the political responses are already being witnessed. MEPs who had previously failed to respond to constituents earlier letters are now writing back, though I presume this is only a coincidence and down to a glitch in their email service.

We are receiving communications here at Central office from domestic and European representatives who wonder how they can help and from those who appear, up until Sunday, to have been completely unaware of the issues.

MEP researchers are asking for our advice and there is a real increase in cross party support.

In the European Parliament MEPs align themselves in 'party blocks' and seek guidance from their block on how to vote on certain issues. We are in the process of securing an audience with one of the blocks that we had previously been unable to reach, and yet another has now significantly changed its stance on compulsory ABS.

These really are great leaps forward and proof positive that the demo is still one of the tools in our box of lobbying tricks. Of course, as a tool,

its over-use will blunt it quite significantly, so we'll have to be very careful when we use it again, and at this stage that may be in the Spring when the Parliament is gearing up to vote on the EU Type Approval and Market Surveillance Regulation.

I have heard talk that some riders are upset about the level of TV coverage the day received, even though it was lead or second story on just about every regional network following news, has been reported in over a hundred newspapers and was covered by (now) over 40 radio stations, with interviews and discussions ongoing.

The good news is that TV directors do not write or vote on legislation, politicians do and we have made great advances in the last couple of days, so the event was certainly a roaring success and everyone deserves a round of applause.

Further action on the streets in the short term will be terribly counter-productive to the whole lobbying process, undermining all the incredible work FEMA are doing on our behalf in Brussels, what MAG and the BMF have been doing here and undermining every letter anyone has written.

It will also of course, ultimately damage biking and its image and any action which is unlawful will only hasten the introduction of more stringent legislation and play into the hands of those who do want to see us off the road.

But let's not be gloomy, the two and three-wheeled community is one that always prides itself on sticking together and we certainly showed we were able to do that on the weekend. It was a truly momentous day, that actually strengthened our relationships with the police, especially all those traffic officers who also ride and their bosses, who admired our composure.

Yes, I know there were some instances of riders dicking about and we are still spending a lot of time cleaning up after them, when we could be concentrating on riders' rights, but we always knew there would be a few who didn't quite get the importance of the demo as a political tool.

MAG is certainly stronger, another 5 groups are about to start and membership figures have taken a sharp upward swing. Perhaps even more encouraging, was hearing from members like Chris, who, unable to ride on the day, rang the office to donate the cost of the fuel they would have used. That really is the spirit of the riding community.

Now that we have the politicians' attention, we'll want to concentrate our efforts in certain areas and we'll be issuing guidance soon on where we'd like your help as things develop and we approach the postponed IMCO (Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee) vote on the 22nd November. *Paddy Tyson*

### **MAG Awareness Day**

Bristol MAG held a MAG awareness day at Riders of Bristol at which six memberships were taken.

There was also a lot of interest shown in The Demo and the proposed legislation from Europe.

### **GWR Rally**

The GWR rally had a new home for this year, thanks to a local member who offered the use of his field, much to his sheep's disgust.



Of course being a new site meant we had to start afresh with new plans, which went awry immediately (as they tend to do) when the weather took a hand and made a tree on the windward side liable to come down.

So, with some quick reorganizing the rally site was switched about and the offending tree cordoned off.

But this did not dampen the rally spirit, and a really great time was had by all.



We even had two chaps come all the way from Cork, despite getting so lost that they discovered they were only nineteen miles from London! For the first time MAG members actually outnumbered Club members, we even had five MAG Reps on site.



Hopefully we will see you all at the GWR rally next year.

### **Events**

**Oct 2.** 1st National Classic Bike Show MAG Classic

**Oct 16.** Hoggin the Bridge

**Oct 20.** AGM Mid-Wilts MAG

**Oct 23.** Soup Run. Bristol MAG

**Oct 7 - 9.** 15th Kamikaze Cave Run, **Mobile Chaos MCC:** <http://www.mobilechaosmcc.co.uk>

**Nov 16.** AGM - Weston & North Somerset MAG

**Nov 17.** AGM Bristol MAG

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A Demented Troll publication