

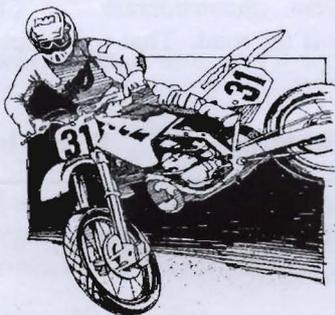
# CENTRESTAND

SEPTEMBER 2004



## let those who ride decide

The journal of the Motorcycle Riders' Association of SA Inc. Printpost approved No. PP:530028/00014



**M.R.A.**  
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**ASSOCIATION OF SA INC.**

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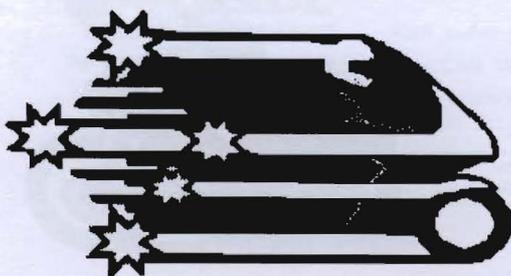
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**COVER PHOTO:** Imelda Marcos, eat your heart  
 out

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## EDITORIAL

On page 7 of this issue you will see a letter to Channel 7 regarding media coverage of things motorcycling in both the general and specific senses.

The MRA telephones have been running hot since the Channel 7 story of riders crashing on Gorge Road went to air on August 29, so I have included the letter in its entirety as I thought it the best way to clarify to members the MRA's approach to the manner in which the media tends to handle motorcycle-related events, such as crashes, functions, involvement in the community and so forth.

What the media deems "newsworthy" and the slant a story is given goes to the heart of the MRA's reason for existence. How the general public perceives motorcyclists directly affects our level of safety on the road. If we are not consciously in the drivers' minds, or we are not considered legitimate road users by the public or traffic authorities, or worse, we are collectively seen in a negative light, it will be a continual uphill battle to do anything constructive about our own safety.

The media's role is purely to facilitate communication amongst people, whether that be on a small or global scale. Hence, people's attitudes will be influenced not only by the information they receive, but the perspective from which it is delivered. If for no other reason, the media has an unequivocal responsibility to provide its services with the utmost integrity.

Hang on, MRA folk; I'll wake up to reality in a minute...

On another tack (or perhaps not), in the lift-out of *The Advertiser* of Saturday, September 11, Motoring Editor Mike Duffy, in discussing road trauma and "road rogues", reckoned that "Road safety campaigns do not seem to work.. The soaring road toll gets the attention only of law-abiding motorists."

Careful, Mike. Although we *think* we know where you're coming from, with that sort of slant we might get the idea that it's only the hoons who are causing all the crashes. On the other hand, you do refer to drivers' "crass stupidity...bad/dangerous driving...idiots...careless...inconsiderate..." Couldn't agree more. Get 'em off the road. That would leave just leaves us motorcyclists...

Ride on, read on, and write in.

**Peter Mount**

Happiness is a self-discipline, and a positive achievement.

*Germaine Greer*

## PIN VISE

By Sean McPherson

(If you don't know what that is ask Uncle Pervie)  
Well folks, by the time some of you read this the AGM will have been and gone. Maybe some of the committee will leave and some might stay.

Firstly, I would like to sincerely thank all those who took up positions on the committee, as I feel that I had the best people working with me towards the running of business over the last year (not all of it smooth, mind!).  
THANK-YOU

The new committee is faced with a problem which I think all have come across over the years - that being our dwindling membership (right about now I beg for the silver bullet which will cure this). From what I've heard it seems to be happening to most clubs around S.A. No-one wants to be involved.

A lot has been said about whether we have done anything other than the Toy-Run. Well, a lot has gone on behind the scenes and it hasn't got a lot of publicity simply for the fact that it isn't seen as a high priority in the media's eyes. Sensationalism is what sells newspapers, and our only way of getting the information to you is via our website or Centrestand, so to keep your finger well and truly on the pulse: read carefully or better still come along to a meeting and put your 5 cents' worth in - we don't bite (well, Les might if he doesn't get a cuppa and chockie bikkie).

We've kept our presence on the Motorcycle Task Force though a lot hasn't been happening quickly (it's a bit like elephants making love - it happens in high places and it takes a couple of years for anything to eventuate).

The Adelaide Hills Community Road Safety Group released their motorcycle program this year. We had input into their document (although the spelling mistakes weren't ours).

We've also kept a reasonable profile in the media, but the silly season is about to start with the finer weather; so please take care out there. Car drivers are always likely to kill us; it's tragic for the rider and his or her family if that happens, and we also lose a member, or a potential one.

Suzi will be fixed soon so I'll see you out there. RIDE SAFE!

Tread warily on those paths that do not accommodate the transience or spontaneity of circumstance.

Sheargold

## SECRETARY/MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Kathleen Stevens

Hello to all. Well, we've made it to the end of our committee year and it would seem we all survived. I would like to thank the committee and all members for helping me out with my first year as Secretary.

It has been a long year for everybody, and the committee has worked very hard trying to make things happen for our members. We have tried some new things and persisted with some old; some worked and some might need to be rethought. If you have any ideas **you** would like to see the MRA try then it is best **you** let somebody know. If **you** don't tell us we won't know what **you** want.

As we return to the warmer weather I'm sure there will be more bikes on the roads, so please remember to be safe and be aware. I'll say goodbye for now and I hope to see you at a ride day soon.

As you all would now know the AGM will be held on **September 27<sup>th</sup>, 7pm** at the **Hampstead RSL**.

Thanks for supporting the MRA

### Membership

Just in brief I would like to thank all of those members who recently renewed their membership. Without continued support from you the MRA would not continue to operate. I would also like to make a big **welcome** to all of our new members; it is great to have some new faces, ideas and bikes around just to keep us on our feet. Thank you to all members and we hope you continue to support the MRA.

### AGM 2004

**Please remember 2004 AGM will be held on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 7pm at the Hampstead RSL. Bar facilities will be available, snacks & nibbles will be provided. Be there to have your say and to vote for your committee.**

#### Washington D.C. (Reuters)

Early this morning a devastating fire burned down the personal library of President George W Bush. Tragically, both of his books were lost in the fire. More poignantly, the President, due to his hectic schedule, had not found time to colour in the second one.

## GNUS

### Motorcycles to Officially Exist

Austroroads, the association of Australian and New Zealand road transport and traffic authorities, has agreed to the classification of motorcycles as a distinct vehicle class.

In transport and planning, motorcycles have been invisible to public policy and hence have been left out of most policies regarding road allocation and parking. Any way of fitting motorcycles into the existing policies has been through the constant efforts of motorcycle lobbyists to extract concessions.

Official classification will facilitate the development of a reliable, low-cost travel exposure index for motorcycles. A study of the feasibility of such an index is being undertaken by the Australian Road Research Board. One part of the study will be to determine how well motorcycles can be detected by traffic-logging equipment based on their wheelbase and weight, and to identify what sort of vehicles trigger false readings. Completion of the study is expected by May 2005.

The purpose of the study is to develop indices for urban and rural travel volume and speed distribution which can routinely be calculated from existing data sources.

This project should lead to structural change, as it will require separate management of motorcycles in transport, instead of the current "afterthought" process. We get thrown a few crumbs from time to time. *(Courtesy AMC circular)*

### RSAC Ideas

Following its recommendations on the SA Road Safety Strategy to the Minister for Transport, the South Australian Road Safety Advisory Council (RSAC) has identified a number of other possible initiatives that require further investigation, such as random drug testing, alcohol interlock improvements, double demerit points, mandatory child restraints, and a review of penalties and good driver incentive schemes. The MRA will keep you informed on these issues, especially in the way they may apply to motorcyclists.

### Pocket Rocket Headaches

Police in the United States are facing up to a new and unexpected terrorism threat on their streets - unlicensed teenagers tearing around on Chinese-built miniature motorcycles.

Standing less than half a metre tall and requiring the riders to have their knees next to their ears, the 2-3hp bikes are the latest rage hitting US streets, said The New York Times.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF MRA SA Inc.

Monday 27 th September

For details see page 9

"Demand is overwhelming us," said Kevin Lee, owner of importer Broadtek LLC in San Francisco. The bikes are now their biggest seller.

They're called pocket-bikes in the US and cost between \$250 and \$725 - well within the means of teenagers too young to drive. Riding them on public roads is illegal, and fines can exceed \$360, but still they have proliferated.

The New York Times said police were struggling to control the errant riders, overwhelmed by their sheer numbers on the streets. "There's a veritable infestation," said Lieutenant Kitt Crenshaw of the San Francisco Police.

Pocket-bikes have top speeds of about 50kmh, but can be modified to hit 70kmh. *(Courtesy AMC)*

### Are Road Weather Alerts Justified?

The Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology provides a road weather alert service for the Adelaide plains and adjoining Hills zone. Alerts are issued for slippery roads when rain falls after a dry spell of several days, or for reduced visibility in fog. Less frequently they may be issued in conjunction with severe weather warnings which anticipate wind gusts in excess of 89 km/h, large hail (2cm or greater) or very heavy rain conducive to flooding.

The Bureau has collected data on rainfall and crashes to identify patterns and determine if the weather alerts are justified or can be improved, with statistics showing an increase in crash numbers on rain days and more so on days with more intensive rain. Data focussing on the first rain event after a dry period tends to support the belief that crash numbers increase in heavy rain, hail, and the breaking of a long dry spell

The Bureau is developing the use of radar to pinpoint where quantified rain events are likely to take place, and how it can be employed to fine-tune the weather reports. This could lead to localising the severe weather category, and perhaps to the delaying of journeys if hazardous conditions appear to be short lived. *(Courtesy Australasian College of Road Safety newsletter)*

### ACRS Membership

The South Australian Chapter of the Australasian College of Road Safety is commencing a membership drive. People who are actively working in road safety or

have a strong interest are invited to join the College. The main objective of the College is to foster communication, cooperation and support among workers in road safety. For further details see the website ([www.acrs.org.au](http://www.acrs.org.au)) or speak to a committee member.

### AMC Conference

Held in Adelaide on July 10, this year's Australian Motorcycle Council Conference enjoyed the highest level of participation since the late 1980s, primarily due to the presence of five new member organisations: Tasmanian Motorcycle Council; Victorian Motorcycle Council; Victorian Motorcycle Union; MRA Victoria; MRA Queensland.

This is very good news for the representative role which the AMC plays, not only because greater numbers mean greater strength, hence influence on issues that affect us, but because it signifies an increasing level of maturity within the broad motorcycling community in understanding the relationship between unity, credibility, effectiveness and progress.

This bodes well for the future of motorcycling in this country, and is most timely given the developments and trends in areas such as vehicle and road infrastructural technology, traffic management systems, environmental issues, human behaviour and globalisation.

The elected office bearers of the AMC are:

- ✓ Chairman: Sammi Ross (MRA SA)
- ✓ Secretary: Les Dicker (MRA SA)
- ✓ Treasurer: Sean McPherson (MRA SA)
- ✓ Committee: Neville Gray (Ulysses)
- ✓ Committee: Adrian Toscano (MRA Qld)

The principal outcomes of the conference will be provided in the December issue of *Centrestand*.

### International Public Policy Conference

The 4<sup>th</sup> since 1997, this conference, conducted by the Federation Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM) through its Commission for Mobility, Transport, Road Safety and Public Policy, in conjunction with the Federation of European Motorcyclists' Associations (FEMA), was held on April 16-18 in Prague.

Eighty delegates attended from 17 European countries and the USA, representing 21 rider organisations, FEMA, FIM affiliates, safety groups and the industry.

Rather than having a specific purpose, the conference was more a forum for exploring different viewpoints and exchanging information on road safety which pertained to three broad fields: human factors, vehicle factors and infrastructure factors.

These fields encompassed rider education, training and collaboration, crash reduction strategies, awareness campaigns, the MAIDS project (*see page 6*), intelligent transport systems, and road infrastructure, which included, crash barriers, road markings, signage, maintenance and so forth.

Like Australian riders, European motorcyclists are intent on reducing their crash and injury rate by adopting a proactive stance in the development and implementation of safety initiatives.

### RSRPE Conference

Hosted by the Road Safety Council of Western Australia, the 2004 Road Safety Research, Policing and Education Conference will be conducted in Perth on November 14-16.

The objectives will be to present current research, discuss road safety practice in education, enforcement, engineering and the road environment, and showcase innovation, progress and new directions in road safety policy, planning, research, practice and evaluation.

Anyone interested in attending should contact Impact Communications on 08 9227 0233.

Wish my computer had -



“ Every writer, without exception, is a masochist, a sadist, a peeping tom, an exhibitionist, a narcissist, and ‘ injustice collector’ and a depressed person constantly haunted by fears of unproductivity.”

Edmund Bergler

(*So go easy on me, OK? ... Ed.*)

## EUROPEAN MAIDS IN DEMAND

European safety researchers have published what is being termed "the most comprehensive in-depth data currently available for Powered Two Wheeler (PTW) accidents in Europe". Titled "Motorcycle Accidents In Depth Study" (MAIDS), the research is based on investigation of 921 motorcycle crashes, 103 of which were fatalities, in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain.

Europe's most thorough study of motorcycle crashes to date points to the usual culprits in crashes but also has a few surprises (*for non-motorcyclists; we knew all this already, didn't we? ..Ed.*). For example, speed may not be the problem that road authorities would have us think. The other driver's failure to see the motorcyclist is still one of the most common causes of motorcycle crashes. The major findings of the study were:

### ☛ The other person is deady...

The object motorcyclists most often collided with were cars. In half of the collisions, the driver of the other vehicle was deemed to have made the primary error that caused the crash, and failed to "perceive" the rider in 70% of those collisions. In 37% of the crashes with a pillion on board, it was the motorcyclist's fault.

### ☛ ...Even when they're not there

The second most common point of impact was the roadway itself. Some of these "single vehicle crashes" (SVCs) happened as the rider attempted to avoid hitting a car (*research in Australia suggests 36 - 38% of SVCs occur due to this scenario...Ed.*), but plenty of riders managed to crash all by themselves. In rural areas over half the accidents happened without the help of another vehicle.

### ☛ It's not the speed, it's the sudden stop

"There were relatively few cases in which excess speed was an issue related to accident causation," the MAIDS authors note. However, they point out that a speed differential (going either faster or slower than nearby traffic) was a contributing factor in 18% of the crashes. They also determined that the typical crash speed was fairly low. In 70% of the crashes, the rider hit the car or other object at under 48 kph. As expected, the severity of injuries increased with crash speed.

### ☛ Don't leave the protective gear at home...

Although 90% of those who crashed were wearing helmets, and they did a good job when they stayed on, 9% of them lost their helmets during the crash, either because they didn't fit properly, weren't fastened properly, or were damaged during the crash.

### ☛ ...Because your skills may not save you

The study concluded that "73.1% of all PTW riders attempted some form of collision avoidance immediately prior to

impact. Of these, 32% experienced some type of loss of control during the manoeuvre".

### ☛ Fewer drinkers crashed more

Only 5% of those who crashed had been drinking, which is much lower than in other studies, but the exposure data revealed that riders who drank were still over-represented.

### ☛ Youth and enthusiasm

Riders between 18 and 25 years-of-age had more than their fair share of crashes, while riders aged 41 to 55 crashed less frequently than the exposure data said they should.

### ☛ Hidden threats

Both riders and drivers "failed to account for visual obstructions" in up to a third of the crashes. Parked vehicles, roadside bushes and glare were considered to be examples of things that could obscure a vehicle, pedestrian or road surface that could lead to a crash, and motorcyclists would be wise to allow for such a possibility.

### ☛ Right there in front of you

The study found that 90% of all threats were in front of the riders who crashed as a result of them.

### ☛ It's not what you ride

The only type of bike that was over-represented in the MAIDS data was "modified conventional street motorcycles" (*definition of 'modified' not clear here - different handlebars, panniers etc?...Ed.*). Engine size also didn't show up as a risk factor. There were not enough bikes equipped with anti-lock brakes to draw any conclusion about their effectiveness.

### ☛ Check those tyres

Tyre failure was the only technical failure that made a real blip in the MAIDS data, at 3.6%. Brake problems were cited in 1.2% of the crashes.

### ☛ Beware the crossroads

Over half of the accidents happened at intersections.

### ☛ Weather or not

Weather was deemed to be a factor in 7.5% of the crashes.

### ☛ Mean streets

"Roadway design defects" caused or contributed to the crashes 3% of the time.

### ☛ The licence matters

Riders with no licence or an inappropriate licence crashed more than riders who were properly licensed for what they were riding. This supports the conclusions of other studies.

**♣ Trained for this?**

Riders who had undertaken some sort of rider training were more likely to try some sort of avoidance manoeuvre, such as braking or swerving. Untrained riders were more likely to crash without doing anything to prevent it. Riding experience also worked in the rider's favour, both generally and on the bike being ridden. Inexperienced riders were more likely to do something that caused or contributed to the crash. As other studies have found, riders are in more danger on a bike that is unfamiliar to them.

*(Courtesy AMC / Association des Constructeurs European de Motocycles. The full 173-page report can be downloaded from <http://maids.acembike.org/>)*

**Toy Run Update**

**By Paul Morgan – Toy Run Coordinator**

We are now into the business end of organising this year's Toy Run.

The band will once again be Marshall Madness as they seemed very popular last year. They will be playing from 12 noon till 4p.m., with a short break at 1p.m. for the speeches and thanks to those who have helped put on the Run. This will take about 15 minutes and then it will be back to the music.

Children's entertainment will consist of a merry-go-round, a bouncing castle, a clown who will be handing out balloons and sweets and, of course, Santa will be there.

All we have to do now is pray for fine weather and a safe run.

Talk to as many bike riders as you can and tell them when the Run is on. The more on the run, the better image we portray to the public of SA.

Once again we are after toys for the older age-group, 12 to 15. Some ideas are sporting goods, books, games etc.

**Remember the date: Sunday December 12, leaving Glenelg at 11a.m. sharp.**

Get there early, be patient, and follow the directions of the marshals and the police. Remember, this is a run, not a race, and there's no cause for haste.

Let's make this another safe run.

Diplomacy is the art of letting someone else have your way

**MRA on Motorcycle Taskforce**

**By Leslie Dicker.**

As a result of a conference on motorcycle road safety held at Glenelg in July 2003, a Motorcycle Taskforce was established to examine all aspects of motorcycle road safety and legislation and to present recommendations to the Minister of Transport via the Road Safety Advisory Council.

MRASA is a member of this taskforce along with other stakeholders involved in motorcycling in SA such as Ulysses Club, BMW Club, Roadskills, Ridersafe, Roadcraft, Motorcycle Techniques, WIMA, Transport SA, SAPOL and the Motor Trade Association.

The Taskforce meets approximately every six weeks to discuss the matters that are considered to be urgent for the safety and improvement of motorcycling in SA. Members of the MRA committee have attended these meetings and are dedicated to its aims.

The discussions at the Taskforce meetings so far have concentrated on matters of policy and procedures; however, the concern expressed by all members of the Taskforce for more public awareness of motorcycles is to be addressed by a media campaign.

The training aspect of motorcycling is also being discussed, both for licensed riders who are returning to riding after many years, and for new riders coming into motorcycling.

The Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme (LAMS) is being examined with a view to implementing it in SA.

The draft of a South Australian Motorcycle Safety Strategy 2004 - 2007 is currently being examined and will be further developed at future meetings of the Taskforce.

The MRASA is confident that this taskforce heralds a new era in which governments of all kinds will listen to the concerns of motorcyclists in regards to road safety and the formulation of legislation relating to motorcycling.

**LETTERS**

**Mr Steve Wise**

General Manager Channel 7

As Spokesperson for the Motorcycle Riders' Association of South Australia (MRA), I was interviewed on Sunday, August 29, regarding the deaths of two motorcyclists on Gorge Road the previous day. An excerpt from the interview was included in the Channel 7 news at 6 p.m. that evening.

With considerable concern I saw that the news editor had chosen a single 5-second observation I had made as the sole MRA comment on this tragic incident and placed it in such a context that its only interpretation was that the MRA, through me, assumed the cause of the crash was due to the motorcyclists speeding. This interpretation was reinforced by a witness ostensibly refuting my purported assumption by claiming that the riders were not speeding.

Motorcyclists (I said, in answer to a specific question from the reporter), like 99% of other road users, do not wilfully disregard the road rules, and adopt a responsible approach to safety on the road. Nevertheless, there are a few people in all road user groups who will behave otherwise. The MRA does not condone speeding or the flouting of road rules, and for those few (in all road user groups) who want to speed, go to Mallala, where it is safe. The underlined passage is the statement the news editor chose to represent the MRA's opinion on the crash. Not incorrect, as it stands, but certainly misleading and out of context.

The choice of script was most unfortunate as, given that the news editor had available the entire interview tape, it would have been manifestly clear that the point I was making was precisely the reverse of that which the editor had me appear to make. As such, the MRA's input was distorted to the point of misrepresentation. Due to this, the MRA has had to respond to many queries from its members and other motorcyclists seeking clarification of its position on the matter, which, for a voluntary organisation, is an unnecessary utilisation of limited resources.

In the interview, I was at pains to make two points:

- The public-at-large tends to assume that any crash involving a motorcycle must have been due to the rider speeding or otherwise behaving irresponsibly. It is unreasonable to make such assumptions in the absence of any substantiating evidence. Many factors affect a motorcycle's handling characteristics on the road, including the behaviour of other road users. Until the cause of this crash is known, one should avoid claiming or implying that it must have been speed.
- Although a number of riders have been killed on Gorge Road, so, too, have a number of drivers. However, the latter attract comparatively little media coverage, giving the impression that the road is the exclusive and dangerous domain of motorcyclists, all of whom speed. Gorge Road and the riders who use it are not deserving of such bias. Statistically, other roads are far more hazardous to travel on, such as the Adelaide-Victor Harbor road, where the vast majority of deaths have involved vehicles other than motorcycles.

The MRA's Spokesperson, or whoever officially speaks for the MRA at any given time, is responsible for publicly reflecting the views and positions of the organisation. When these views or positions are distorted such that they are no longer those of the MRA, the public is misled and, as a consequence, may develop opinions about motorcyclists which are patently unwarranted or incorrect.

One of the MRA's constitutional objectives is to improve the public image of motorcyclists, and we have been diligently and determinedly striving to achieve this goal since the organisation's formation in 1979. However, it has been, and may continue to be, a difficult challenge, for we are reliant to no small degree on how the media portrays motorcyclists to the general public. In the past, with some exceptions such as the Toy Run and the Childhood Cancer Run (when covered), motorcyclists have usually been presented in a negative light. Even an all-too-common situation such as a car and a motorbike colliding is frequently presented as a "motorcycle hits car" scenario, thereby reinforcing, if only subtly, the public's perception that motorcycles are inherently dangerous and that their riders are generally at fault in crashes, if only for being a motorcyclist.

This approach does motorcyclists a grave disservice for, the MRA believes, it encourages motorists to shrug off their responsibility to be alert for riders in the expectation that riders, since it is their own choice to ride, should accept full responsibility for their own safety.

It is the MRA's conviction (supported by non-partisan research) that motorcyclists' safety would be significantly enhanced if motorists were to increase their awareness of them; that is, to consciously look for motorcyclists and to give them due consideration as fellow road users. The MRA also believes that the keys to improving road safety across the board include, along with mutual consideration and awareness, mutual courtesy and tolerance, and an appreciation of the behavioural characteristics and limitations of vehicles other than one's own.

We believe the media can play a major role in assisting motorists to become more aware of motorcyclists and of the safety issues of concern to us by presenting news and other reports impartially, fairly and accurately. For this reason we also wish to maintain a strong and healthy liaison with Channel 7, and welcome discourse on any matter which may be relevant to motorcyclists' safety or in the public interest.

We trust you will appreciate our concerns regarding this matter.

Peter Mount

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Motorcycle Riders' Association of South Australia Inc. will be held on Monday 27th September at 7.00 pm at the **Broadview RSL Hall**

All the positions of the Association listed below will be declared vacant and the 2004 -2005 Committee will be elected.

<b>President</b>	<b>Membership Secretary</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Minutes Secretary</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Editor 'Centrestand'</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Stock Control Officer</b>
<b>Publicity Officer</b>	<b>Road Safety Officer</b>
<b>Register Liaison Officer</b>	
<b>SAMRATS Coordinator</b>	
<b>General Committee Representatives (8)</b>	

All financial members of the MRA SA Inc. are eligible to stand for election to one or more of the positions. Nominations should be in writing to the Secretary of the Association prior to the beginning of the AGM.

All members and friends are invited to attend the meeting.

NOTE: The President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer are the Office Bearers of the Executive Committee of MRA SA Inc.

Kathleen Stevens  
SECRETARY

## Streetlight Technology

In 1809, Humphrey Davy, a professor of chemistry at the Royal Institute, London, demonstrated the production of light from electricity. A current jumping a gap between two carbon rods flooded the hall with a blue-white light, to the amazement of the audience.

Nearly two hundred years later, electric illumination, via discharge, remains the primary method for industrial lighting applications, including street lighting.

The many types of high-intensity discharge lamps still use electrodes and produce light from an induced current. However, unlike the Davy lamp and others in the 19th Century that would only last a few hours, modern lamps enclose the arc in a 'tube' containing various elements, extending this life to many years.

One such lamp is the high pressure sodium 'twin arc', with an average life of 55,000 hours, or nearly thirteen years of night operation. In addition to this long life, an efficiency of 128,000 lumens per watt make this lamp unsurpassed by peer technologies. *(But you've all heard of the Davy lamp, haven't you? ...Ed.)*

## UK GOVT GROUP CALLS FOR ATTITUDES AND POLICY CHANGES TOWARDS MOTORCYCLING

The final report of the UK Ministerial Advisory Group for Motorcycles, released by Road Safety Minister David Jamieson on August 2 this year, is a landmark in the development of policies towards motorcycling.

The group was set up by the Government in 1999 to consider the role of motorcycling within integrated transport policies and to analyse how motorcycling could contribute to reducing traffic pollution and congestion on British roads.

Important issues such as motorcycle safety were a key focus, along with an analysis of initiatives such as allowing motorcycles to use bus lanes and how improvements can be made to the provision of motorcycle parking.

The report represents a vital contribution to the Government's thinking as it develops the National Motorcycle Strategy, which Ministers have previously announced will be completed later this year.

The final report is believed to be the first detailed consideration of wider motorcycling policies undertaken by a government in Europe, and is the result of five years of positive dialogue between the industry, Government and motorcycle groups.

Craig Carey-Clinch, Motorcycle Industry Director of Public Affairs said; "This report is extremely welcome, with its publication demonstrating the value of the Advisory Group working partnership with Government. The report comments on key issues which will have a fundamental impact on the way that motorcycles are viewed as a transport alternative, with key issues such as access to bus lanes highlighted.

"Safety issues have been considered at depth, with new research adding to our understanding of motorcycle safety. The report shows that in addition to improvements to rider training, safety often goes beyond the rider, with recommendations showing that both Government and local authorities need to consider how the transport environment and infrastructure impacts on motorcycle safety. Clearly, more work is required to improve accessibility and security for riders, particularly in urban areas."

Carey-Clinch added; "The report is a real landmark in motorcycling. This is the first time that motorcycling's role has been considered in such depth and the first time that motorcycling groups have presented a policy document to Government which has been developed under the chairmanship of the Road Safety Minister

himself. The industry now looks forward to the forthcoming National Motorcycle Strategy. After decades of policy stagnation, we will be disappointed if the Strategy doesn't give clear direction to policy makers at both local and national level to develop real policies for motorcycle safety access and security and to stop ignoring the positive role that motorcycling plays in helping to reduce traffic congestion and pollution."

The report makes a number of recommendations to Government. These include:

- A fundamental review of gaining a motorcycle licence under the Direct Access Scheme;
- Rider improvement and speed awareness courses for offending road users of all kinds;
- A review of the position concerning motorcycle use of bus lanes;
- The mainstreaming of motorcycling into the transport planning process.

The advisory group set up five taskforces to examine motorcycle safety and security, integration and traffic management, environmental and fiscal issues, statistics, and research.

The terms of reference for the advisory group were to consider:

- a) the safety record of motorcyclists and agree on measures to be taken to improve safety, including general road user behaviour and consideration of training and licensing arrangements;
- b) the environmental impact of motorcycles and to agree what measures, if any, should be taken in light of the conclusions reached by the group; and
- c) the role of powered two wheelers of all sorts in an integrated transport policy including the scope for traffic management measures that are beneficial to motorcyclists and contribute to that policy.

The Advisory Group Members are:

Motorcycle Industry Association  
 Motorcycle Retailers' Association  
 British Motorcyclists' Federation  
 Motorcycle Action Group  
 Despatch Association  
 Motorcycle Rider Training Association  
 Automobile Association  
 RAC Foundation  
 Local Authority Road Safety Officers' Association  
 Local Government Association  
 ACPO  
 (Courtesy AMC)

## Dead Duck

A woman brought a very limp duck into a veterinary surgery. As she laid her pet on the table, the vet pulled out his stethoscope and listened to the bird's chest. After a moment or two, the vet shook his head sadly and said, "I'm so sorry. Cuddles has passed away."

The distressed owner wailed, "Are you sure?"

"Yes, I am sure. The duck is dead," he replied.

"How can you be so sure?" she protested. "I mean, you haven't done any testing on him or anything. He might just be in a coma or something."

The vet rolled his eyes, turned around and left the room, returning a few moments later with a black Labrador retriever.

As the duck's owner looked on in amazement, the dog stood on his hind legs, put his front paws on the examination table, and sniffed the duck from top to bottom. He then looked at the vet with sad eyes and shook his head.

The vet patted the dog and took it out, returning a few moments later with a beautiful cat. The cat jumped up on the table and also sniffed delicately at the bird from head to toe, then sat back on its haunches, shook its head, meowed softly, then padded out of the room.

The vet looked at the woman and said, "I'm sorry, but as I said, this is most definitely, 100% certifiably, a dead duck." Then the vet turned to his computer terminal, hit a few keys and produced a bill, which he handed to the woman.

The duck's owner, still in shock, took the bill. "\$150!" she cried, "\$150 just to tell me my duck is dead?"

The vet shrugged. "I'm sorry. If you'd taken my word for it, the bill would have been \$20. But, with the lab report and the cat scan..."



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