

Right To Ride Ltd is a not-for-profit company set up by Trevor Baird and Elaine Hardy in Northern Ireland. The organisation was set up to fight for the rights of motorcyclists and invests in research and raises important issues. Trevor was the General Secretary for MAG UK then the Technical Officer at FEMA, representing the International Coalition at the UNECE in Geneva. Elaine was the Research Officer at MAG UK, then went to Brussels, where she successfully bid for over 300,000 Euros in project funding on behalf of FEMA. In 2009 they decided that committees and internal politics were wearing them down and decided to move to Northern Ireland (Trevor's birthplace).

Trevor got involved in a local initiative called Ride It Right, which was prompted by two motorcycle fatalities in the Moyle area in April 2009. Meetings were held and this initiative culminated in an event in August 2009. In 2010 and 2011, Trevor got funding from the DOE and promoted further motorcycle safety activities in Northern Ireland including first aid courses for motorcyclists (www.rideitright.org and www.firstaidforriders.org).

They also were instrumental in the setting up of a Motorcycle Safety Forum by the Department of the Environment, Road Safety Division. The first meeting was held in February 2012. They have also got involved in local initiatives through clubs, events and general Northern Ireland motorcycle initiatives (www.righttoride.co.uk).

In the meantime, Elaine carried out research projects relating to motorcycle safety issues. More recently she completed an in-depth study of 41 motorcycle fatalities in Northern Ireland in collaboration with investigators from the Northern Ireland Road Traffic Collision Investigation team. This study was supported by the British Motorcyclists Federation.

Because of their background, they have kept their nose regarding proposals and legislation that come from Europe, using their contacts in the Commission, industry

and with other organisations in Brussels, and comment on their EU website: www.righttoride.eu

It was suggested that Trevor and Elaine are just two people on computers. That's true, but they'd like to think that their small contribution may help in the grand scheme of things to keep people motorcycling.

NI Motorcycle Fatality Report 2012

Right To Ride has published the *Northern Ireland Motorcycle Fatality Report 2012*, an in-depth study of 39 cases relating to motorcycle fatalities in Northern Ireland between 2004 and 2010.

Evidence

In 63.4% of cases motorcyclists applied their brakes prior to the collision and 43.9% applied their brakes severely. Of the 41.4% motorcycles that slid after falling, 24.4% fell onto their right side and 17.1% onto their left side. There were two cases identified where Anti-Lock Braking Systems (ABS) may have made a difference to the outcome of the collision; both were on a straight section of road.

Analysis

Of the 39 cases analysed, 43.6% concluded that another vehicle was the primary cause of the collision. 76.5% of the cases highlighted that the motorcycle's lights were switched on so the other vehicle's driver was in a position to see them. However, there appears to be a problem of looking but not seeing, which may be due to the size of the motorcycle or simply because the car/van driver is expecting to see another car or van and has difficulty coping with the unexpected.

There were four cases (10.3%) of speeding, but in all cases, the actions of the other vehicle driver precipitated the collision. Equally there were four known cases (10.3%) in which the rider had levels

of alcohol over the legal limit and/or drugs in their blood. Three of these collisions were single-vehicle (no other vehicle involved) and the fourth ran a red light through an intersection with no headlights on and impacted a car crossing the intersection.

There were nine cases (23%) in which the motorcyclists involved in a collision were either riding in a group or with another motorcyclist. In all these cases the total number of motorcyclists killed was n.11/n.41 (26.8%).

Focus group

A focus group of trainers, a collision investigator, police and government agency representatives discussed the relevance of technology on vehicles as a deterrent to collisions as well as the advantages of teaching hazard perception and anticipation in initial and advanced training as a defence against potential collisions.

The consensus was that while technology may in some cases be beneficial, good training was more important. However, the availability, image and cost of advanced training seemed to be a barrier to getting more riders involved.

The focus group indicated that the best solution to avoid road traffic collisions is anticipation and hazard awareness.

The consensus was that the only reliable way to prevent motorcyclist injuries and deaths is to prevent the collision in the first place, which means the rider needs to get his/her eyes up and scanning ahead, taking evasive action when a potential collision is still several seconds from happening.

RIGHT TO RIDE

RAISING ISSUES, RESEARCH AND FUNDING: NORTHERN IRELAND'S RIGHT TO RIDE LOOK INTO THE REASONS WE COME OFF OUR BIKES... AND HOW TO PREVENT IT