

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE **KEVIN MAYNE**



'Summer's here and the time is right, for dancing in the streets.' It's been a soundtrack for sunny

days ever since Martha Reeves and the Vandellas sang it in the '60s. Should CTC members ride along singing that 'the time is right for *cycling* in the streets'? I think so. It has been a glorious spring and everyone I talk to is sharing stories of record mileages and endless dry days. Riding a bike in warm weather has a double virtue: it's enjoyable and we are reducing the carbon outputs that are causing this freak weather.

As part of sharing our love for cycling, I have been excited by the recent announcement that CTC has created its 200th Bike Club for young people. This means over 18,000 young people will be introduced to cycling through touring, travel, bike maintenance and just having fun on bikes. And it was really exciting to meet the winners of our first Young Volunteer of the Year awards at the CTC Dinner. These young people and the adults that support them could be CTC's next generation. As far back as the Millennium we asked you who we should be looking to attract to CTC membership. Overwhelmingly the number one choice was 'more young people'. With Bike Club, we are getting there.

I always feel cycling has kept me younger, especially when I'm mountain biking with my 20-year-old son. But I realise I'm now five years older than the Prime Minister. Time flies! Perhaps I need a new soundtrack? I'll have to ask Bike Club members what they expect to be cycling to in 40 years time.

Lorry safety in sight

Campaign by sister of killed cycle commuter forces the European Union to act on lorry safety



Gail Porter launched CTC's own lorry campaign last year

The European Commission is required to draw up plans to improve the visibility of cyclists and pedestrians to lorry drivers, thanks to a campaign by the sister of a cyclist killed two years ago by a lorry in Notting Hill, London.

Eilidh Cairns was fatally injured while riding to work. The lorry driver said he hadn't seen her. After pressure from her family, the police tested the driver's eyesight and found it below the required standard. The driver was prosecuted, not for causing death through dangerous or careless driving, but for uncorrected defective vision. He was fined just £200.

Eilidh's sister Kate Cairns set up an online campaign 'See me, save me' (www.eilidhcairns.com/seemesaveme) and persuaded her local MEP, Fiona Hall, to table a declaration in the European Parliament, calling on the European Union to take action to reduce the risks of lorry drivers

failing to spot pedestrians and cyclists. Kate then cycled to Strasbourg with a group of campaign supporters to lobby MEPs. The declaration gained the support of a majority of the European Parliament, which means the European Commission must comply.

The success of Kate's campaign is timely. The United Nations is launching a Decade of Road Safety Action, and the UK Government's new Road Safety Strategy is due shortly. The Department for Transport will soon publish its research on ways to improve 'direct' and 'indirect' visibility for lorry drivers, whether through the window or via mirrors.

Addressing the lorry threat is a key priority of Transport for London's Cycle Safety Action Plan for the year ahead, and for the London Cycling Campaign. LCC recently gained 4,500 signatures for their 'No More Lethal Lorries' petition in just one day. Lorries are disproportionately involved in fatal collisions with cyclists in the capital, and the LCC has a five-point plan for tackling the threat: see www.no-more-lethal-lorries.org.uk/.

Lorry design and safety features are largely driven by EU regulation, and any changes would have to be supported by the Council of Ministers as well as the European Parliament. UK Transport Secretary Philip Hammond MP has said he will back EU action to require the fitting not only of more mirrors but also sensors, to warn drivers of nearby pedestrians and cyclists.

CTC has welcomed his announcement – although we are unhappy that the Government is at the same time proposing to relax the eyesight requirements for drivers, particularly lorry drivers. We are also urging that the Government should not rely solely on technological fixes. CTC is working with Aggregate Industries (sponsors of CTC's Fill That Hole pothole-reporting iPhone app) to offer cycle training for their lorry drivers, following a successful scheme run by the London Borough of Lambeth for the drivers of their dustbin lorries.

CTC's campaigns briefing on cycles and lorries is at ctc.org.uk/lorries.

MORE CAMPAIGNS NEWS?
 Sign up to Cycle Digest. Email cherry.allan@ctc.org.uk

Forest access denied

CTC joined eight other members of the Forest Access User Group to present its concerns over the future of forest access in England to James Jones, the Bishop of Liverpool. He has been appointed to chair the Independent Panel on Forestry, set up following the Government's U-turn on forest sales.

CTC had previously expressed concern that cyclists have no representation on the panel; the only panel member primarily interested in public access is Tom Franklin, Chief Executive of The Ramblers.

CTC's off-road advisor Colin Palmer (pictured) had been backed by Department for Environment officials for inclusion on the panel. He said: 'I have rarely met such anger as that which has been expressed by the mountain biking community over the government's apparent indifference to cycling. This not only potentially affects our current access but also the enjoyment of thousands of families and their children, and it must not be left unchallenged.'

Existing legislation still allows



the Government to sell up to 15% of the public forest estate annually. During the forest sell-off controversy it announced a suspension of this process to reassess the criteria for these sales. These sales could now resume, following the Panel's advice.

CTC has three broad objectives in the public forest debate: to ensure that current levels of cycle provision are maintained and protected from potential threats; to ensure that policies support continuous

improvement of current cycle provision; and to protect future cycle use using 'Section 16 dedication' of The Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, which allows landowners to grant access in perpetuity.

What you can do: visit ctc.org.uk/forests to sign a statement demanding action on access issues. And if you have any evidence about local Forestry Commission woods that have been sold and from which cyclists are banned, let us know.

NEWS IN BRIEF

CYCLISTS' DEFENCE FUND NEEDS NEW TRUSTEES

The Cyclists' Defence Fund (CDF) is looking for new Trustees. The CDF is concerned with all aspects of the law as it relates to cycling and cyclists. It focuses mainly on disseminating information on cycling-related legal matters and on supporting legal cases involving cyclists where that is in the wider public interest. We are particularly looking for Trustees who have: time to give to CDF; a real passion for cycling; the ability to forge contacts within the legal profession; knowledge of publishing. You do not need to be a lawyer. To apply or to find out more, please email info@cyclistsdefencefund.org.uk, or see our website, www.cyclistsdefencefund.org.uk.

POTHOLE COMPENSATION

CTC member Peter Lodge has been awarded more than £2,000 in compensation after he was thrown from his bicycle when it hit a pothole. The pothole surrounded a Yorkshire Water valve cover, creating a gap between the metal box and the road and causing a dangerous defect. Mr Lodge suffered several cuts and abrasions. Mr Lodge used the free legal advice afforded to him by CTC, and was represented by Russell Jones & Walker. Don't forget that as well as having access to CTC's Accident Line, you can report potholes online: www.fillthathole.org.uk.

NORTH YORKSHIRE PLANNER WANTED

CTC North Yorkshire would like to receive expressions of interest for a volunteer Rights and Planning Officer, to replace their retired colleague Ron Healey. The post requires residence in the county, attendance at quarterly Committee meetings normally held in York, and an ability to engage and liaise effectively with relevant Local Authority Officers, CTC Right to Ride representatives and local CTC groups within the County. Please forward expressions of interest to Keith Benton, the CTC North Yorkshire Secretary - dkb@ctcnorthyorkshire.org.uk.

Stand for CTC Council

Nominations for CTC Council are now being sought for members to represent Yorkshire and the Humber, West Midlands, East of England, and London for the three years starting on 1 January 2012. Nomination forms are available from CTC National Office and at ctc.org.uk, and must be returned by 15 August 2011.

The number of supporters' signatures needed on a nomination form has been reduced from ten to five this year. Council is also able to assist members if they want to put their names forward but need help in contacting other CTC

members. Chair of Council David Cox said: 'It is important that Council represents the diversity of CTC membership. It would be good to see more women and younger people joining Council. We also need expertise in project management, business, the professions, charities and the voluntary sector.'

To find out more, visit the CTC website or talk to an existing Councillor or the Chief Executive. See also page 20. You could also come along to a Council meeting to see how Council works in practice - phone Sue Cherry on 01483 238302.

STOP PRESS

CTC is to become a unified membership organisation with charitable status. At the 2011 AGM in Weymouth on 14 May, more than 88% of the 11,000 CTC members who voted, in person and by proxy, were in favour of the resolution to amend CTC's Memorandum and Articles of Association, which required 75% of votes cast in order to be passed.

The move to charitable status had been approved in principle at the 2010 AGM and was subsequently confirmed in a Poll of the Whole Club. But it could not happen until the membership voted to change CTC's Memorandum and Articles of Association, to bring them into line with charitable organisation requirements.

Before the vote took place, members had to the opportunity to speak for or against the resolution. Some did, and Chair David Cox thanked them for the debate.

More details on the AGM voting, and in particular the move to charitable status, will appear in the next issue of Cycle, as well as online at ctc.org.uk.



BIKE CLUB OFFICER DAMIAN BONSALL



I was really excited to attend the launch of the new Mereside Pump Track this spring. This was the culmination

of a year's hard work in trying to find a suitable venue, funding and a hosting partner for the facility.

The track is a great example of what can be achieved by organisations working in partnership, including Bike Club and Cycle Blackpool. Young people were involved in the process at every stage of the development including the design of the track.


Seeing so many young people having such a great time and so many people from the local community offering their support made it all worthwhile. The launch event was held at the track and at Mereside Community Centre, which is right next door.

A Bike Club is being set up as a collaboration between Blackpool Young People's Services, the Police, Mereside Community Association and Blackpool Leisure Services. Bike Club has provided a fleet of BMX bikes, helmets and gloves.

I think this is the biggest thing to happen in young people's cycling in Blackpool because it has an appeal for everyone. Each time I have visited the track it has been really busy with young people from a part of the town which has traditionally been badly neglected.

The local housing association and the police are already reporting a significant reduction in nuisance and crime levels, and the Mereside Pump Track's users are really loving the new facility.

Helmets optional

 CTC responded to a helmet giveaway for cyclists by the AA on 15 April by staging a simultaneous Highway Code giveaway for drivers. Campaigners were concerned that the AA's focus upon vulnerable road users risked misrepresenting the sources of road danger.

CTC's Campaigns and Policy Director Roger Geffen explained: 'If the AA wants to improve safety for cyclists, it should work with groups like CTC to encourage all road users – including cyclists – to follow the Highway Code. Police data shows that the risks cyclists face come overwhelmingly from dangerous driving. The AA's gimmick gives the impression that cycle helmets are an essential safety aid, and that cyclists who don't wear them are to blame if they get hurt – neither of which is true.'

In Northern Ireland, meanwhile, the threat of compulsory helmets has receded for now.


CTC joined a team of cycle campaigners giving evidence on the helmet compulsion bill that was presented to the Northern Ireland Assembly. If Assembly members still wish The Cyclists (Protective Headgear) Bill to become law, it will have to be re-tabled.

Roger Geffen said: 'I am very grateful to CTC volunteers Barry Flood and Tom McClelland, who have played major roles in this campaign. The petition against the Bill will remain open at tinyURL.com/NorthernIrelandHelmets for people to sign.'

CTC also defended MP Norman Baker's decision to cycle without a helmet. 'The Minister for cycling shouldn't need to defend his decision to cycle without a helmet,' said Roger Geffen. 'In countries like Holland, helmet use is almost unheard of, yet cyclists there have an excellent safety record.'

See ctc.org.uk/helmets for more details.

CTC bars cars from bridleway

 CTC volunteer campaigner Matt Hodges has fought and won a three-year campaign to protect cyclists' safety in a narrow bridleway underpass in Witherslack, Cumbria. CTC and the Cyclists' Defence Fund had to threaten legal action before Cumbria councillors finally accepted the advice of their own officers to prevent drivers from using the tunnel, which is no bigger than a pedestrian

subway and which forms part of a coast-to-coast National Cycle Network route.

Local CTC members first called on Cumbria County Council to prevent drivers using the underpass after a cyclist was injured by an illegal driver there in 2008. The council, under pressure from Witherslack Parish Council to retain car access, resisted – even after a complaint to the Local Government

Ombudsman, who ruled that Cumbria's inaction amounted to maladministration.

At a meeting on 23 March, the council heard the arguments of Matt Hodges and Chartered Surveyor Robert Halstead (who was supported by the Cyclists' Defence Fund). They decided to block car access. Officers are expected to install a lockable bollard, which only local farmers will be able to open.

Dangerous cycling?

Proposed bill is a distraction from the real danger on our roads: motor vehicles. Roger Geffen explains



 In March, Andrea Leadsom MP presented a Bill in the Commons proposing a new offence of causing death or injury by careless or reckless cycling. Soon after, the media carried reports that Road Safety Minister Mike Penning MP was planning to support her proposal, with legislation due this autumn. Department for Transport officials demurred, saying this was only an idea under consideration and not an agreed plan.

Ms Leadsom said in Parliament that she felt that the law did not treat drivers and cyclists equally. Her concerns were prompted by the case of 17-year-old Rhiannon Bennett, a girl killed in Buckingham. The cyclist involved, 36-year-old Jason Howard, was prosecuted for 'dangerous cycling', for which the maximum penalty is £2,500. He was convicted and fined £2,200.

CTC's problem with Ms Leadsom's proposal is that she seeks to bring the laws on irresponsible cycling into line with those for irresponsible driving 'so all road users are equally protected and take equal

responsibility for their actions'. Yet the law on bad driving is riddled with inconsistencies, and leads to a far greater number of injustices – with pedestrians and cyclists being disproportionately the victims.

Dangers to pedestrians

From 2005-09, there were 3,051 pedestrians killed in collisions with motor vehicles, an average of 610 a year. By contrast, there were 11 pedestrian fatalities in cycle collisions during this period, or 2.2 per year. Drivers killed 226 pedestrians on footways and verges in that five-year period; cyclists three for that whole decade.

The number of pedestrians injured in collisions with cyclists is also small. In London over the last decade, just 10 were hurt in collisions with cyclists on footways and five by red-light-jumping cyclists – compared to 447 and 105 by motorists in those situations.

Tougher sentences

There are differences in sentencing options available for drivers and

cyclists. The maximum sentence available for drivers convicted of 'causing death by dangerous driving' is 14 years in jail. Short of bringing an assault, manslaughter or murder charge, the toughest sentence for a cycling offence is a two-year maximum for 'wanton and furious cycling'.

Yet the courts rarely go anywhere near the 14-year maximum for drivers. Indeed, the sentences handed out are often derisory. A fine of a few hundred pounds and points on the driver's licence is disappointingly typical. See the Stop Smidsy website for examples: www.stop-smidsy.org.uk/case-studies.

The three cyclists involved in fatal collisions with pedestrians on pavements or verges in the last decade were not let off so lightly. In each case, the cyclist was convicted of 'wanton and furious riding', under the Offences Against the Person Act, which Andrea Leadsom claims was 'rarely if ever used'. Two of them – Darren Hall (in Weymouth) and Robert Lambert (in Guildford) – both received prison sentences. The third, Peter Messen, was given a suspended sentence, as he was a vulnerable young man with learning difficulties.

The only other cyclist convicted following the death of a pedestrian in the last decade was Jason Howard, whose sentence so concerned Andrea Leadsom. The media said he was riding on the pavement; the police did not. But if the media reports on the incident were in other respects accurate, many would share Ms Leadsom's view that the £2,200 fine – like those handed out to many more motorists – was inadequate.

Summary

CTC is in favour of an increased priority for road traffic policing, and would be happy to back a sensible amendment to the law on irresponsible cycling, even if it were only rarely used. But the proposed 'dangerous cycling' Bill is a distraction from the much greater risks posed by drivers, and from the many more derisory sentences that driving infringements attract.