

Celebrating people who are passionate about enabling others to cycle

Welcome to the Christmas 2019 issue of Velocheer, Cycling UK's newsletter for all our amazing past, present and future volunteers.

There's been a lot going on since the last issue in September so we hope you can find some time to sit down with a nice hot drink and enjoy reading about everything that's been going on in the world of volunteering with Cycling UK over the past three months.

In this edition, we have exciting news about our new volunteer platform, Assemble, which will be launched early in the new year plus news of many other events and activities.

Next year will also be equally busy as we continue to roll out the second year of the 5-year Volunteering Strategy.

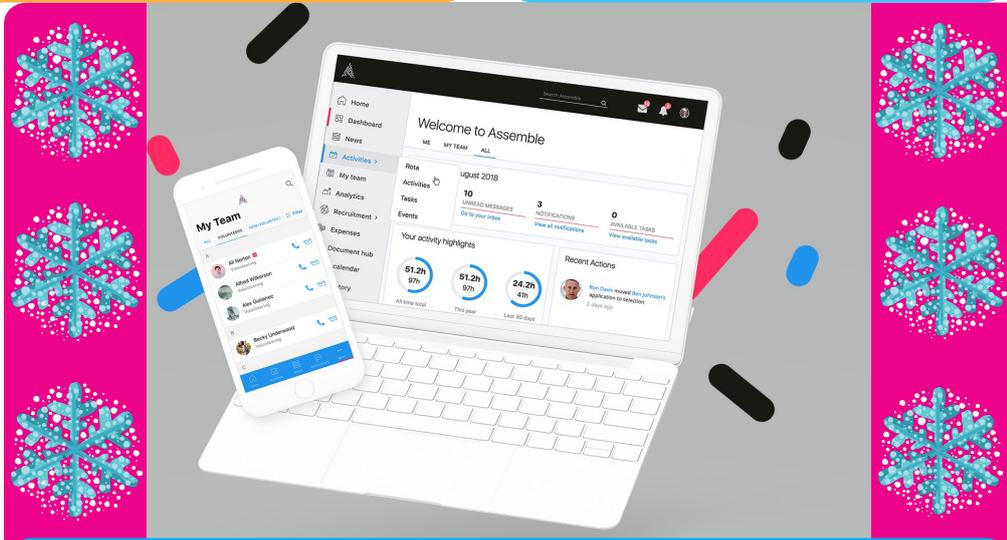
Have a great Christmas and a wonderful cycling new year.

Gjoril, Julie, Tom and Alex The Volunteering Team at Cycling UK



In this issue

- Assemble is nearly here
- Volunteers of the Month
- The Inverclyde Bothy wins
- British Cycle Quest
- Café Life
- Member Group Returns
- Introducing Tom Page
- Including others in cycling
- Volunteering video
- Devon donation delights...and much, much more



Our volunteer platform Assemble is coming soon

Some of you will already be aware of the investment Cycling UK has made over the past year in our volunteers via our [Volunteering Hub](#). Many of our Member Groups have been using our Group Tool for seeing the members living in their areas and sending out newsletters and other communications to them. Now, after having trialled it for several months, we are excited to announce that Assemble, a digital tool to recruit, manage, co-ordinate and recognise our volunteers will be launched at the end of January 2020.

Assemble will enable us to provide you with the best resources possible so that you can help Cycling UK fulfil its mission of enabling a million more people to cycle. Depending on your role, you'll be able to:

- **easily access resources, advice and support**
- **network with other volunteers locally**
- **contact Cycling UK staff**
- **recruit more people to help with your activities**
- **log the hours you spend on voluntary tasks**
- **read the latest volunteering news**
- **reward other volunteers and be recognised for your own efforts and much more.**

Janet Ironside of Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders CTC says of our Volunteering Hub: **"We are really delighted with the website and the tools that Cycling UK has developed. Fantastic!!"**

Throughout spring 2020, we'll be running workshops around the country providing not only training in our resources and tools but also the chance to network with other volunteers, whatever your role. We really hope to meet many of you there.

Special offers for
Cycling UK members

There's a huge range of member benefits on offer this Christmas!





They are The Stars in our eyes

Congratulations to Cycling UK partnership project, The Inverclyde Bothy, which has won [the Volunteer Team Impact award](#) at the Reach for The Stars Awards 2019. The Bothy runs a diverse program of activities to break down barriers and help people be more active in the Scottish city.



Pat hands over the handlebars after more than two decades leading Tayside CTC

Many thanks and congratulations to Pat Harrow of Tayside CTC on her retirement after more than 20 years of being Secretary of the group. She was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation by David Ryder, Chair of Tayside CTC's Committee.

Also awarded [Certificates of Appreciation](#) recently were Jim Brown, outgoing Secretary of Cycling UK Stevenage, also after over two decades of service, and Jeffrey Eaves (pictured bottom right), who has taken a step back from his role as Validator of the BCQ (British Cycle Quest) after 15 years.

We thank them and any other recent 'retirees' for their outstanding contributions and welcome all those who have stepped in to fill their (cycling?) shoes.

Do you know anyone who deserves recognition and thanks for their dedication to Cycling UK's mission to enable a million more people to cycle?

Our '[Going the Extra Mile](#)' award programme is the perfect way to highlight both group and individual achievements.

The Quest continues with some fantastic new volunteers at the helm

We are very pleased to announce that two new volunteers have come forward to build on Jeff's excellent work developing BCQ: Stephen Dee is the new BCQ Validator and Jacqui Godfrey will be the new Checkpoint Co-ordinator, looking after 402 checkpoints and making sure associated questions and answers are up-to-date. They are both bringing immense knowledge and enthusiasm to their roles: Stephen has reached 238 checkpoints so far and Jacqui has visited all of them and is now on her second time round!



L to R: Stephen, Jeff and Jaqui with their BCQ medals.



Loving the life

Every cyclist loves a café, as much for the chance to take a breather and catch up with fellow riders as much for the coffee and cake.

That's why Cycling UK is delighted to recognise the cafés in every area with our annual **Cyclist Café of the Year** awards. Volunteers Pat Harrow from Cycle Ayrshire and John Plant from Stourbug, alongside celebrity Angellica Bell, made the final selections.

Riders from Sheffield CTC (pictured above) enjoyed attending the presentation at Bank View café in South Yorkshire, which won a Lifetime Achievement award.

The awards took on extra significance this year with Velolife in Maidenhead, which had been the centre of controversy, winning the **People's Choice award**.

Cycling UK Head of Campaigns Duncan Dollimore said:

"For a good news story, you can't get much better: common sense eventually prevailed, with the withdrawal of planning enforcement action against the owners. This was a fantastic example of Cycling UK members, supporters, cyclists and cake lovers coming together to support a popular café that was threatened with closure. It just shows that your support for our work and efforts makes a huge difference."

Club Confidential: Member Group Annual Returns

Thanks to the 80% of Cycling UK Member Groups that have now sent in their Annual Returns and completed the survey into their activities. It's been really interesting finding out about what our groups have been up to over the past 12 months.

If your group has yet to send theirs in, please do so as soon as possible! (The deadline was Friday 6 December.) Please also try to complete the survey, which will help us support you even more to help get more people cycling.

Turning the Page on a new chapter...



Hi, I'm Tom Page, the newest member of Cycling UK's Volunteering Team. I started back in April this year and have been busy reviewing our network of Local Campaigners and looking at how we can better support

their hard work.

From the beginning of 2020, along with a new Groups Development Manager, I'll be taking on some of Julie Rand's responsibilities, becoming your go-to contact at the National Office for anything group-related.

We're really excited to be creating a team dedicated to looking after all our groups and I hope we can help them grow and thrive. I look forward to supporting and you next year.

Tom

Including others in cycling

All our volunteers are amazing but there is one special group who really **Go the Extra Mile** when it comes to helping others experience the joy of cycling. They are the people who help run **Alice Holt Inclusive Cycling** near Hampshire, turning out nearly all year round in all weathers to ensure those who are less fortunate than themselves can enjoy experiencing the fresh air and freedom of riding in the forest. The group, which is affiliated to Cycling UK, was set up several years ago and continues to thrive - it is now a charity in its own right - and has a range of adapted cycles suitable for people with a wide range of both physical and mental disabilities.



The benefit that people get from the experience of riding around the all-ability circuits in the forest cannot be underestimated. **Mountain biker Roland**, who has been a regular visitor to the project since a mystery foot ailment over the summer has restricted his ability to cycle, says: "I'd almost forgotten just how much fun whizzing down twisty singletrack can be!"

But the volunteers themselves also derive enjoyment from their involvement in the scheme. Howard says: "It is an honour to be able to help. It is also great to build up a rapport with our regular visitors each week, and to see the recognition in their faces, even in those that are not able to express themselves so well. It makes standing around in the cold for hours all worth it."

Pictured above is Cycling UK member Roland Seber on a recumbent with Alice Holt volunteers Peter, Howard and John

Hats off to a man in a million as Russ completes his challenge of a lifetime

Riders from local groups West Surrey Cycling Club (formerly West Surrey CTC) and Fleet Cycling welcomed Cycling UK member the amazing Russ Mantle recently when he completed his record-breaking ride as **the first British person** to officially complete a million miles of cycling in his lifetime. Russ, a former racer who was a ride leader for West Surrey for 20 years, was featured in many articles in the national press celebrating his incredible achievement. Way to go Russ!



Russ (centre) and his entourage are pictured in front of the Wellington Monument near his home in Aldershot, Hants. Photo by Robbie Spanning

Coasting along for cyclists

Well done to voluntary Cycling UK Local Representative Mark Harrison, who has been busy devising a Source to Sea cycle route following the River Thames.

As well as this, Mark has also been busy attending the Thames Path Partnership meetings and working with the Thames Path manager to open up more of the towpath to cycling.

This ties in perfectly with Cycling UK's plans [to develop a network of off-road cycle routes](#) stretching the length and breadth of the United Kingdom.

Delighted with Devon's donations

Many thanks to the fantastic volunteers (below) from CTC Devon (now South Devon CTC), who have very kindly donated an amazing £2,000 in proceeds from the Devon Dirt and Devon Delight Challenge Ride Series events this year to the Cyclists' Defence Fund.

Duncan Dollimore from Cycling UK said: **"Huge thanks to Graham Brodie and the volunteers who organised these events, and to all you who took part to raise these vital funds to protect current and future cyclists."**



A starring role in our volunteer video

All our volunteers are stars in our eyes but a few of them are literally going to be film stars when we launch our volunteering video after Christmas. The short film will aim to inspire other people to become volunteers in cycling by highlighting the satisfaction and pleasure it gives to those who give their services freely. Among those appearing in the film are the wonderful volunteers (pictured right during Diwali) from our Community Cycle Clubs in Birmingham.



Don't forget to follow us!





Santa's cycling helpers

Christmas has been saved for the 500 people who ordered hard copies of our [Great North Trail guidebook](#) as gifts for their loved ones. The book is an 800-page colour publication that details everything you need to know about the new long-distance off-road route, devised by Cycling UK, that links the Pennine Bridleway with the northern tip of Scotland.

Since its inception, Cycling UK has been inundated with interest in the trail and was wondering how to fulfil the hundreds of orders that came in for the guidebook.

A call-out was made for volunteers to come to our National Office in Guildford to indulge in mince pies whilst packing up the books for posting.

Pictured above with Cycling UK Campaigns Officers Sophie Gordon and Keir Gallagher (far left and right), are regular office admin volunteers Roland and Roy (centre) and West Surrey Cycling Club's Martin (next to Sophie), who came in just for the day.



Sophie says: "The task of posting up all these orders in time for Christmas morning was quite daunting until we had the idea of recruiting volunteers. We are so grateful to them for their time and the job was done in double quick time so everyone will have a lovely surprise come Christmas Day."

#You Made it Happen

One of the best ways to recognise the achievements of our volunteers is to showcase the impact they have. In October, as part of the #YouMadeItHappen campaign, we [showcased in numbers](#) some of the projects, programmes and events that our members and supporters took part in to bring the joy of cycling to thousands more people.



#volunteer4inclusion

We also celebrated International Volunteer Day on Thursday 5 December with a profile of Cycling UK member [Beatrice Shire](#) who co-founded and runs Wheel Potential in Canterbury, a project that provides adapted bikes for use by the community.

Say a Big Thank You!

Another chance to recognise volunteers in grassroots sport and recreation is this Sunday's BBC1 Sports Personality of the Year programme, when the [BBC Get Inspired Unsung Hero](#) for 2019 is crowned. They will be one of those people who devote hours of their free time to encouraging others to take part in physical activities.



So, during the month of December, we're asking our groups across the country to thank their volunteers as well by using the **#BigThankYou** on social media. Volunteers mostly take on their roles for the reward of helping people in the community but research shows that volunteers who feel valued themselves, are more likely to stay in their roles. We'll also be joining in, of course!