

Building MTB's future

The CTC & IMBA-UK Mountain Bike Conference takes place at Cycle 2008



To help get British mountain biking on the right track for the future, CTC and IMBA-UK are holding a conference at Earls Court on 9th October, on Cycle 2008's trade day. Anyone with an interest in developing or providing facilities for off-road cyclists is welcome to book a place.

The Government wants to get two million more people active by 2012 and CTC and IMBA-UK believe that mountain biking could deliver those numbers if there is a clear progression for riders of all backgrounds and abilities from the bike shop to the trail.

This conference is a launch pad – a chance for the mountain biking sector to come together and set the agenda for the years to come.

WHO IT'S FOR

CTC and IMBA-UK have brought together key speakers from across the world for this major mountain bike conference at Cycle 2008. The programme has been specifically designed for those who are passionate about off-road cycling including: trail builders, project managers, sports development officers, funders, landowners, AONB and National Park staff, and all those involved in managing or developing off-road cycling in the UK.

Ian Warby, CTC's Senior Off-road development officer, said: 'It's an exciting time and this is a fantastic opportunity for everyone who's interested in mountain biking to look to the future, build on recent success and maximise the opportunity to get more people out on their local trails.'

Karl Bartlett, Chairman IMBA-UK, said: 'IMBA UK is pleased to be sharing this



Photo: Ian Warby

joint conference with CTC. Taking place at Cycle 2008, IMBA's message of advocacy for mountain bikers will reach more riders in the UK than ever before. This is a great opportunity for mountain bikers to come together, share their enthusiasm and experience, and continue improving mountain biking opportunities and participation for the future.'

To book a place at the CTC & IMBA-UK conference, visit www.ctc.org.uk/mtb or for more information tel: 0844 736 8450. The conference is a feature of the trade day of Cycle 2008, and there will be time for attendees to visit the show itself.

CYCLE 2008

Cycle 2008 is open to the general public for three more days, from 10th-12th October, and CTC members can take advantage of a discount entry price. Instead of the £14 on the door price, you

can pay just £9 by booking a ticket online. Visit www.cycleshow.co.uk/CTC and enter the promotional code 'CTC' when prompted.

Cycle is the UK's biggest bike show, with hundreds of high-end brands on show. You can try many of them on the Mountain Bike Experience and Commuter Test Tracks. The new Cycle Arena will feature regular cycling fashion shows and celebrity Q&A sessions, and you can stock up on clothing at the Retail Zone. For more on what to expect in terms of new components on show, turn to page 48 for 'Welcome to 2009'.

CTC will be there too, on stand C8, so feel free to stop by and say hello – or to direct potential new members our way!



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Boris opens cycling centre

While British cyclists were winning medals in Beijing in August, London mayor Boris Johnson opened a £4.5m cycling centre in east London, designed to bring further success in 2012. The mayor was joined by Commissioner for Sport Kate Hoey, Sydney gold medallist Jason Queally and scores of cycling enthusiasts of all ages at the opening of Redbridge Cycling Centre, which includes an off-road trail: Hog Hill.

CTC were lead off-road contractors and were instrumental in the building of Hog Hill. Over the last year CTC Senior Off-Road Development Officer Ian Warby worked as project manager with Trailworks to transform the green field site into a trail that is suitable for mountain bikers of all ages and experience. Speaking to Ian and the team Boris Johnson said they had done a 'fantastic job'.

Opening the centre, Mr Johnson said: 'I can't tell you how delighted I am to be here to officiate the opening of what I think is London's first real example of legacy from the Olympics.'

'I'm very pleased that the London Development Agency (LDA) has invested so much in this project and I hope people will get down here, get on their bikes and get ready to star in the 2012 Olympics.' He then jumped on a bike and set off on a lap of the 1.25 mile track, accompanied by a group of young cyclists.

The Redbridge Centre, funded by the LDA, replaces Eastway Cycle Circuit, which is being turned into the VeloPark for the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympic Games. With a 1.25 mile circuit, an off-road trail and a club house, it is designed for both community and competition use.

FROM THE CAMPAIGNS DEPT **ROGER GEFFEN**



From a cycle campaigning perspective, the success of our Olympic medallists comes at an exciting

time. Earlier this year, the Departments for Health and for Culture, Media and Sport gave a commitment to get two million more people reaching the recommended levels of physical activity by 2012.

The Dept for Culture, Media and Sport has a sports-related programme planned. The Dept for Health has yet to say how it plans to meet its half of the target. All we know is that it wants to set up a body called Active England to deliver it.

Cycling's health benefits hardly need restating. But cycling is especially valuable for the people whom the Dept for Health most needs to reach out to: those with low levels of activity and fitness to start with, and particularly those from disadvantaged groups.

Starting cycling requires no big investment in time or money. It can be learned easily, and there's no need for an expensive club or gym membership. Cycling integrates into your daily life, giving you exercise for free whilst simply getting from A to B. As it's weight-bearing, it's much easier to stick at for anyone overweight to begin with.

There are many ways to make cycling available to those who find exercise difficult due to physical, sensory and learning disabilities – as the inspirational stories emerging from CTC's Cycling Champions attest.

CTC has been making these points to the Dept for Health, which is due to publish its strategy by the time you read this. We await its publication with interest.

CTC Council in 2009

Eight vacancies on CTC Council will be filled by a mix of old and new faces from 1st January next year, following the recent call for nominations. Three members of Council were re-elected unopposed: Jim Brown (East of England), Peter Mathison and David Cox (both West Midlands). Three others stood down at the end of their term: Simon Legg (London), Jill Kieran (East of England), and Allan Luxton (Yorkshire and the Humber) – pictured, in that order, on the right.

Existing councillor Arthur Spurr is seeking re-election for Yorkshire and the Humber, but with two new nominees and only two seats available there will be an election. Members in the region will have received a ballot paper with this issue of Cycle and are urged to cast their vote.

Martin Cockersole was nominated and unopposed for the East of England region, and takes his seat alongside Jim Brown. In London, two nominations were received for the seat vacated by Simon Legg and for an existing vacancy in the region; Greg Price and Helen Vecht are therefore elected unopposed.

Commenting on the sitting councillors who were standing down, Council Chair David Robinson said: 'All three will be missed. Jill Kieran, my predecessor as Chair of Council, has been a major driver for the growth in Local Groups. I would also like to thank Simon and Allan for their work, particularly on CTC's new five-year strategy.'



FROM THE TOURING DEPT MARK WATERS



First we had the fiasco of the Spanish helmet laws. Now the French are at it. From September this year it

became compulsory to wear a high visibility waistcoat when cycling in France after dark or during poor visibility. This applies universally unless you happen to be cycling in a town, when it is not obligatory. So all cycle tourists take note: if you're grovelling up the Galibier in cloud or have been dropped off by the Bike Bus at dead of night and you've got to pedal a bit to reach your first night stop, don't forget the high viz waistcoat! (You can get one from CTC Shop.)

News arrived just before we went to press of the untimely death of honorary CTC member and cycle tourist extraordinaire Ian Hibell. Ian was one of my heroes: his escapades by bike stretched the boundaries of possibility almost to breaking point. If you haven't read his book, 'Into The Remote Places' then I urge you to beg, borrow or steal a copy. There you'll discover what it's like to cross the Darien Gap (a swamp, basically), cycle the length of the Amazon basin and journey alone through the Sahara to reach central Africa and then narrowly avoid death from the Green Monkey Fever Epidemic.

If you met him you wouldn't believe he was the type; he was the most modest man you could imagine. Ian was travelling through Greece when he was hit by a driver who was later arrested. We offer our sympathies to all his friends and relatives.

An short obituary to Ian appears in this issue. His relatives are hoping to publish his book, 'Four Days at Ragged Point' in the near future. (We ran an extract in Dec 07/Jan 08.)

Eurostar bike boom



Photo: Tim Jackson

It's not just folders any more: there has been a 300% growth in the number of passengers travelling with full-size bikes on Eurostar, the high-speed passenger train service that links the UK to the Continent. It follows the introduction of a new bicycle reservation system in April 2008.

The new system enables cyclists to reserve a place for their bikes on the same train they are travelling on, simply by calling 08705 850 850. The new service costs £20 for a one way journey and is available between London, Paris and Brussels.

The new reservation system was introduced following discussions with CTC and after calls from other cycling groups to make it easier for passengers to plan a cycling holiday using Eurostar. Between April and August 2007, Eurostar's registered baggage service (before pre-booking a specific train became possible) carried 347 bicycles. Between April and August this year, the launch of the reservation system has increased the number of bikes carried (using both the new system and the registered baggage option) to 1,377. In addition to these figures, many cyclists who have folding bikes or who can dismantle their bike and place it in a bike bag choose to carry them on board the train as part of their normal luggage allowance.

Dave Holladay, CTC's Public Transport Advisor, said: 'These impressive figures are a result of Eurostar's willingness to sit down, listen, and institute a practical and pragmatic solution. The response from cyclists is obvious and we look forward to developing further opportunities.'

Raising standards?

The Driving Standards Agency wants feedback on its proposed changes to the driving test. Its proposals include a module-based approach to learning over a longer period of time with the potential for a new qualification to introduce young people to the skills and knowledge before they reach the age of 17.

In CTC's draft response, available at www.ctc.org.uk (under Campaigns & Policy), we have suggested several areas where the driver training process can be improved to reduce danger to cyclists. CTC has also suggested that high quality advanced cycle training, such as Bikeability Level 3, would give teenage children better road sense

and a greater understanding of the needs of cyclists.

We have also suggested that training for cycle instructors and examiners should include an element that informs them of why cyclists' take a primary position on the road and how to behave around cyclists.

CTC would be grateful for comments from individual members. Please email or write to chris.peck@ctc.org.uk with your suggestions. Individual responses from members and groups are encouraged. Details can be found at learningtodrive.dsa.gov.uk but the consultation ends imminently: 6th October.

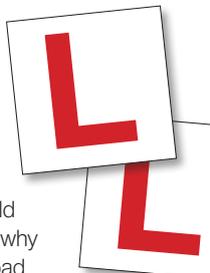


Photo: Clive Andrews

CTC Disability Cyclist Forum

Are you a CTC member with a disability? Is there anything that would increase your enjoyment of cycling and CTC? CTC Councillor & Equalities Champion Barry Jordan would like to form a group of members to discuss items such as access to events, cycling infrastructure and equipment.

I would envisage the group

working mainly working be email or an online discussion group, with perhaps a first meeting in a central location where we can get to know each other. In the future we may want to organise cycling events.'

You can contact Barry by email at hjb536@blueyonder.co.uk or by phone: 01795 429061.





LEICESTER

Asian women on wheels

The UK's first charity cycle ride just for Asian women took place in Leicester in August, with support from CTC's Cycling Champions project. Forty-four young women aged 14-23 from the BAPS Women's Youth Wing got on their bikes to raise funds to support a health and exercise wing for their Hindu temple, with each participant riding about 20 miles.

CTC Cycling Development Officer Elizabeth Barner worked with the Leicester Cycle-city Workshop to get the event off the ground. 'The young women's wing of the temple chose to do a sponsored ride. I then worked with them to provide training to ride on the road, maintenance training, bicycles, helmets and lots of advice about routes, etc.

'The mandir (temple) organised 44 young women to ride, along with a health event for the women of the mandir, with health checks provided

by Asian women for Asian women, generally from within the organisation. They organised press and drew attention to this as an event inspiring the Asian population of Leicester to attend to health, including high rates of heart disease and diabetes.'

British South Asians have 40-60% higher mortality rates due cardiovascular disease than the general population and are significantly less active than comparable groups. One of the priorities of CTC's Cycle Champions Project in Leicester is to use the council's delivery partners in the city to work with the South Asian and other community groups that can benefit from cycling to address health, wellbeing and transport needs.

The sponsored ride, which reached its target of a cumulative distance of more than 500 miles, was formally opened by Leicester's Lord Mayor, Manjula Sood.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MANCHESTER MEETING

South Manchester CTC Member Group are to vote at their AGM on 23rd October 2008 as to whether they will become an independent CTC Member Group no longer under the control of Manchester & District CTC (formerly Manchester DA). The area the group will cover is: South Manchester, Stockport, High Peak, Macclesfield and North Cheshire.

FIX YOUR BIKE

A basic cycle maintenance class will take place at Sutton West Centre, Robin Hood Lane, Sutton, Surrey, from 9.45am until noon. Tel. Shirley on 020 8642 3720.

CTC CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

Peter Hawkins has been working for cycling for more than 20 years. He has served the CTC Scotland committee and been treasurer of Lothians DA and the Kirkpatrick Macmillan Cycle Rally committee for many years. But he is at his happiest when he is out there repairing a path, putting up signs, organising a volunteer work-force, surveying for a cycle map. Peter is a CTC Right to Ride rep, and the regional representative for on-road cycling in Scotland.

SCOTLAND

Green travel towns

Fifteen million pounds will be spent in Scottish towns and cities on measures to increase walking and cycling, decrease local car use and emissions, reduce congestion and improve local neighbourhoods. Stewart Stevenson MSP, the Scottish Government's Minister for Transport and Climate Change, announced the winning bids for funding to become 'Sustainable Travel Demonstration Communities', in Scotland. Winners are: Barrhead, Kirkwall, Dumfries, Dundee, Kirkintilloch/Lenzie, Larbert/Stenhousemuir and Glasgow East End. Measures will include walking and cycling improvements, personalised travel planning and Velib-style public bike hire schemes in Dumfries and Dundee.

Photo: courtesy of Matt Hodges



SWINDON & COLCHESTER

Workplace cycle challenge

New cycle commuters pedalled 35,110 miles in the Swindon Workplace Cycle Challenge this summer, saving more than £3,630 on fuel and burning only calories instead. Overall, 850 people got on their bikes.

The Challenge was a competition open to all organisations in the Swindon area to get the most staff to cycle for just 10 minutes or more. There were six categories according to the size of business and 28 companies took part. The winners were: Halcrow Group Ltd, DHL Excel Supply Chain, AFL Telecommunications Europe Ltd, ESRC Finance, Legatio Technology Ltd and New College (HR), who all had the highest percentage of their staff riding a bike. The final results for all categories

are available at www.swindoncyclechallenge.org.uk.

Challenge Co-ordinator Thomas Stokell said: 'It's amazing so many people took part, many of whom had not got on a bike in years – that's one of the great things about cycling, you never forget how to ride. I hope this is the catalyst they need to start cycling more regularly.'

The programme is funded by CTC, as one of its Cycling Champions projects, and the Big Lottery and is being supported by Swindon Borough Council and Great Western Community Forest. An identical Workplace Cycle Challenge is already underway in Colchester. It runs from 22nd September to 12th October, and there are prizes up for grabs. For details go to: www.colchestercyclechallenge.org.uk.

EVENT NEWS

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2008



Photo: Brian Lowe

70 years young

To mark their 70th Anniversary, CTC Chester and North Wales are planning a year of celebration in 2009. The highlight will be the hosting of CTC's 2009 AGM, National Dinner and Prizegiving in Queen Hotel, City Road, Chester on 25th April. The following day there will be a programme of rides planned.

Chester – one of the eleven new 'Cycling Towns' – has plenty of accommodation, is easily accessible by public transport and offers good cycling routes into the heart of the city.

More information about the AGM and Dinner will appear in forthcoming issues of Cycle. For updates on events planned for Chester and North Wales' anniversary, see www.ctchesterandnwales.org.uk or contact the local group secretary (details on p80).

It's worth thinking now about fellow CTC members that you could nominate for our Volunteer of the Year awards for 2008. These are the people who represent the best aspects of CTC at a grassroots level. Regional and national winners are invited to CTC's annual dinner. Entry forms and the stories of past winners can be found at www.ctc.org.uk/volunteerawards. Or you can call CTC national office.

EVENTS IN BRIEF

YORK CYCLE SHOW AGM

This will be held at 10.00 on Saturday November 22nd at the Railway Institute in Queen Street, York. It's open to all CTC members with an interest in promoting the event. It will be followed by a Ordinary meeting of the new Committee.

PHIL & FRIENDS RIDE

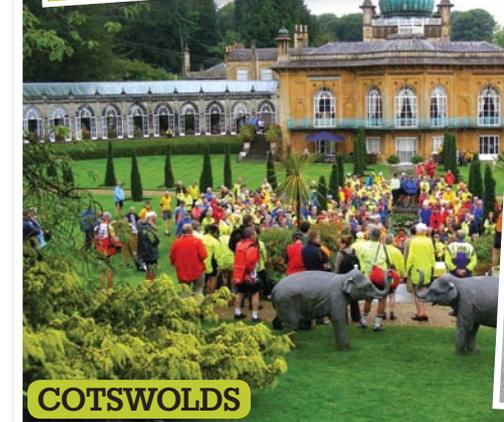
Just under 350 riders took part in the 2008 Phil & Friends Challenge Ride, cycling either 106 or 150km. The absence of Phil Liggett (commentating on the Tour of Ireland) didn't stop enthusiasts turning out to tackle great Peak District climbs like Holme Moss and Winnats Pass. Alongside the ride, Wood Lane Countryside Centre, Wood Lane, Hillsborough, hosted the inaugural Sheffield Cycling Festival.

Around 300 people turned up to enjoy food, music, bike maintenance advice, training, and numerous trade exhibitors. The enthusiasm of the cycle projects team and their disability bikes 'try out sessions' set the scene for others to follow, and there was a North Shore style off-road trial for mountain bikers.

WE GOT IT WRONG

■ Iceland article, last issue: The emergency shelter photographed is not the one in Nyidalur, but is on the Kjoellur route. The Nyidalur hut is much bigger.

■ Eric Tull's obituary last issue was written by Gordon Smith, not Gordon Taylor.



Birthday Rides 2008

More than 500 cyclists gathered at Moreton in Marsh in the Cotswolds for the CTC Birthday Rides in August. The 130th birthday of CTC was celebrated in the grounds of the Indian-themed Sezincote House, where waterproofs were tested to the limit.

Despite being the wettest Birthday Tea on record, spirits remained high and Bo Clown kept everyone amused with Punch and Judy and Kamishiba storytelling. A brief break in the clouds allowed special guest Ted King to cut the cake before the heavens opened.

Day rides during the week look participants down local lanes and greenways and through picture postcard villages. Between grey clouds, the views were outstanding. There were audax rides of 200, 100 and – for younger riders – 50km. Evenings were filled with quiz nights, films, pub rides, and a ceilidh.

The weeks' other events included a unique tour of the Fire service College with its railway station, plane crash site and motorway pile up zones. The Hook Norton brewery tour visiting Britain's only steam driven brewery was so popular it had to be repeated.

Most importantly, Birthday Riders brought over £130,000 into the local economy – a much needed boost after last year's devastating floods. Thanks are due to members of Cheltenham, Oxford and Coventry CTC and Corinium CC, who helped pull the event together in just six months.

Photos: Michael Pitt-Payne & Melita Luxton