

Bike to work **BOOST**

Your workplace needs you! Rosie Downes explains how to get your work colleagues cycling with a CTC Workplace Cycle Challenge



Commuting to work is fast, healthy, cheap, reliable, and fun. That's why we do it. The wonder is that other people don't. But you know how it is: getting a coffee at the office, with colleagues complaining about traffic jams and problems on the train, any mention of cycling will be met with affable bewilderment. Work colleague #1 will muse that you must be very fit. Colleague #2 will declare that the roads are so busy these days, aren't they? And colleague #3 will mutter a non sequitur about cyclists on pavements.

CTC's recent membership survey via Newsnet (now CycleClips) showed that more than 93% of you commute by bike, with 53% cycling to work on a daily basis. Yet on a national level, only 3% of commuters use a bicycle to get to work. We've got a vested interest in increasing that figure. Cycling to work is an easy way for people to discover – or rediscover – cycling as a form of transport. And the more people cycling, the safer and more pleasant it is for everyone: the Safety in Numbers effect.

In addition to the campaigning CTC does to make cycling to work a mainstream option (www.ctc.org.uk/campaigns), we also run the Workplace Cycle Challenge programme.

Laying down the challenge

A CTC Workplace Cycle Challenge pits organisations within a town or city – and individual departments within the organisations – against each other to see who can get the most staff to cycle for at least 10

minutes during a two or three week period. It's a competition where more cyclists means prizes. The winners are the organisations and departments that motivate the highest percentage of staff to cycle.

At the end of 2009, almost 4,000 people had taken part in a CTC Workplace Challenge. The results speak for themselves: 84% of (ex!) non-cyclists said they intended to cycle more after taking part. So far, more than 700 people who had never ridden a bike or who had not cycled in over a year have taken up the challenge.

It's proof that the best way to convince people about the pleasures and benefits of cycling is to get them on a bike. Here's just a sample of the participants' feedback:

- › I had forgotten how much fun it can be cycling.
- › I really enjoyed it – and felt better for it rather than coming in the car.
- › I didn't realise how enjoyable it could be!
- › Now I have a bike that I can get on and ride. I have friends and family close by that I can cycle to rather than going in the car. I might even try popping to the shops.
- › Quicker to get to work and more beneficial healthwise!
- › I realised I actually enjoyed it!
- › Because I bought a bicycle and I want to use it.
- › I enjoyed being on the bike more than I thought I would. There are more cycle paths now and I don't feel confident riding on the road.
- › I had got out of the habit. Thanks to some gentle encouragement I remembered cycling can be fun.

Your cycle commuting habits

A survey of 2000 CTC members conducted in April 2010 told us:

93%

of respondents commute by bike, and 53% of those ride to work daily.

5-10 miles

The most common commute distance one way, but 3% commute more than 20 miles each way.

70%

of those who commute by bike do so all year round.

75%

have secure cycle parking available at work.

65%

have showers and changing facilities available at work.



The most popular type of bike for commuting amongst CTC members is a touring bike, which 30.5% use, followed by a hybrid (pictured, 26%). 10% commute on a fixed wheel/singlespeed.

“It's a chance to encourage your employer to be more cycle friendly and to act as cycle commuting ambassador to your colleagues”



- › I enjoyed cycling... something I hadn't even thought about doing for many years (even decades) before the Cycle Challenge prompted me.
- › I only did a short ride for the challenge but realised that I had missed riding a bike for a long time and also that it was a fun way of exercise.
- › Because I have had another go – and discovered it's still all right to cycle! And it's cheaper than fuel.

As well as getting your employer involved in a Workplace Challenge, you could advise colleagues on quieter routes to work

that the Workplace Challenge is a winning formula to get people back on bikes. It shows the Challenge is the first step for many people towards changing the way they travel. It offers encouragement and support to make a short journey by bike to work and gives people the opportunity to get back on a bike again for the first time in years.'

Get colleagues cycling

In summer 2010 CTC will be delivering another programme of Workplace Cycle Challenges across the UK. (See www.ctc.org.uk/workplace.) It's an opportunity to encourage your employer to be more cycle-friendly – and also to act as a cycle commuting ambassador and to share your cycle commuting

Workplace Cycle Challenges have taken place in towns and cities with wide variations in topography and traffic density. 'The data is consistent across all the locations,' says CTC Cycling Development Officer Ian Richardson, 'proving

knowledge and expertise with your colleagues.

CTC will be working closely with local Primary Care Trusts and councils to get people cycling to work. Six of the locations in the South East have been selected as part of the Finding New Solutions initiative from Cycling England, which aims to explore new ways to introduce cycling to different audiences.

If you work in any of the 2010 Workplace Cycle Challenge locations (see map, overleaf), then your workplace is eligible to join in. Taking part is easy. Just get your employer to sign up before the end of the Challenge period; register on the appropriate Workplace Challenge website; ride a bike at least once during the Challenge period; and log your cycling on the website. And encourage your colleagues to have fun riding a bike too. That's it.

You're also eligible if you live but don't work in a Workplace Cycle Challenge location. Register on the Challenge website, record your cycle journeys and you'll be eligible for some of the challenge prizes. Instead of encouraging work colleagues to get on their bikes (assuming they don't share your commute) you can get your friends and family to cycle instead.

The Swindon story

The more employers who take part in an area's Workplace Cycle Challenge, the bigger and more far reaching the results. When 913 people from 41 organisations took part in the Swindon Workplace Challenge:

- › 49,190 miles were cycled.
- › 306 of the participants never usually cycled or cycled once or twice a year.
- › 4,285 litres of fuel and £5,100

What's stopping you?

What about those of you who don't cycle to work?

The two main reasons for either not commuting or not commuting more regularly by bike (after too greater distance) were 'no suitable safe route' and 'traffic danger'. Lack of secure bike parking and changing facilities, and bad weather were way down the list.

CTC's campaigning network addresses safe routes and traffic danger head-on with initiatives like www.stop-smidsy.org.uk, which tackles bad driving, www.fillthathole.org.uk,

which enables all road users to report potholes and get them filled, and 20mph speed limits in residential areas.

Other CTC initiatives – including cycle training; more cycle parking at train stations linked to easier access for bikes on trains, road infrastructure and best practice; and encouraging cycling friendly employers through the 'BUGS' (Bicycle User Groups) and 'Cycle Friendly Organisation' programmes – add up to safer, pleasanter commuter cycling.



Photograph courtesy of Specialized

WORKPLACE CHALLENGE



Where & when

1 Edinburgh Completed

Web: www.edinburghcyclechallenge.org.uk
Contact: Esther Halcrow esther@thebikestation.org.uk, 0131 667 3558

2 Leicester May

Web: www.leicesterchallenge.org.uk/home
Contact: Andy Cryer andycryer@leicestergov.uk, 0116 223 2108

3 Colchester May

Web: www.colchestercyclechallenge.org.uk
Contact: Anna Stenning anna.stenning@colchestergov.uk, 01206 506 412

4 Manchester June

Web: www.gmcyclechallenge.org.uk
Contact: Stephen Ruffley stephen.ruffley@ctc.org.uk, 07855 749 180

5 Cambridge June

Web: www.cambridgecyclechallenge.org.uk
Contact: Vanessa Kelly vanessa.kelly@ctc.org.uk, 07817 774 649

6 Swindon June

Web: www.swindoncyclechallenge.org.uk
Contact: Anna Cipullo anna.cipullo@ctc.org.uk, 01793 511 033 or 07717 696 672

7 Chichester June

Web: www.chichestercyclechallenge.org.uk
Contact: Simon Ballard sballard@chichester.gov.uk, 01243 534694

8 Southampton June

Web: www.southamptoncyclechallenge.org.uk
Contact: Thea Bjaaland thea.bjaaland@ctc.org.uk, 07816 391 079

9 Oxford June

Web: www.oxfordcyclechallenge.org.uk
Contact: Dan Harris dan.harris@ctc.org.uk, 07526 690 410

10 Darlington July

Web: www.darlingtoncyclechallenge.org.uk
Contact: Louise Pearson louise@getmorepeoplecycling.com, 07939 431 509

11 Ashford September

Web: www.ashfordcyclechallenge.org.uk
Contact: Spencer Morgan, spencermorgan@ctc.org.uk

13 Isle of Wight July

Web: TBC
Contact: Louise Pearson louise@getmorepeoplecycling.com, 07939 431 509

12 Milton Keynes July

Web: TBC
Contact: James Butcher james@getmorepeoplecycling.com, 07815 199839



The 2008 Swindon Cycle Challenge was a huge success, with big companies such as Vodafone taking part

- were saved by people cycling not driving.
- 4.2 million kilojoules of energy were burnt: that's roughly equivalent to 1,194 pounds of fat.
- 5,283 cycle trips were made; 3,540 were for transport purposes.
- Approx 15,174 kg of CO₂ was saved by people who cycled for transport.

'The 2008 Swindon Cycle Challenge was a huge success with over 900 employees swapping the car for a bike,' says CTC Community Cycling Development Officer in Swindon Anna Cipullo. 'The website is still being used to this day to record their mileage and CO₂ savings. With the help from Big Lottery funding we will be running the Challenge again in June 2010 and offering Dr Bike days, road cycle training, introductions to mountain biking, prize draws and much more.'

Bitten by the BUG

If there isn't a Workplace Challenge taking place in your area, there are better ways to get your colleagues cycling than proselytising at the coffee pot. How about setting up a Bicycle User Group (BUG)? A BUG is a group of employees who cycle to work – or would like to – and want to improve conditions and facilities and encourage others to try cycling.

Your employer pays a modest affiliation fee and reaps the benefits, not just in PR terms from being a green, cycle-friendly employer, but

also in terms of staff productivity. Commuters who cycle are the most punctual employees and the health benefits of cycling mean that they take fewer days off sick.

CTC has set up a new BUG affiliation package for workplace cycling groups. CTC-affiliated BUGs benefit from: organisers' liability insurance, so any cycling activities your BUG organises (such as Bike Week rides or training days) are fully insured; and third party insurance for guests (that is, riders who are not BUG members). As a CTC BUG, you can get your events listed for free on CTC's website, plus a copy of Cycle for your BUG six times a year.

BUG registration is available at £75 per year for organisations with more than 250 employees, or £50 per year for organisations with fewer than 250 employees. There is also a one-off set-up fee of £25 in your first year, which covers the costs of setting up your BUG.

Once your employer has set up a CTC BUG, it's free for CTC members to join. Employees who aren't CTC members can also join their organisation's BUG online for an annual fee of just £12. Joining the BUG provides members with access to a wide range of discounts and benefits, including third party insurance for all their rides and a regular CTC e-newsletter. Download a CTC BUG application form from www.ctc.org.uk/bug or call: 0844 736 8451.

