



(Clockwise from far left) One aspect of The Trax is its Bike Club-supported youth club – participants learn new bike skills every weekend. The 390-metre dirt track is also used for BMX racing and coaching. Children's races take place on the track too; it was designed so it can be ridden by riders of widely different abilities.



# THE TRAX

**THE TRAX IS A THRIVING URBAN MOUNTAIN BIKE AND BMX CLUB BASED IN TOTTENHAM, NORTH LONDON. CO-FOUNDER MARIO SCHMOLTZI SPOKE TO CTC'S IAN WARBY ABOUT WHAT THE CLUB DOES**

**T**ottenham is one of the last places you'd associate with mountain biking. An inner city area with inner city issues, it was here that the London riots sparked off in the summer of 2011.

'I find it sad that the riots are still so strongly associated with Tottenham,' says Mario Schmolzi of The Trax bike club. 'We were coaching here on the weekends the riots happened, and I didn't find the atmosphere during and after the events to be anything like the images shown on TV.'

The Trax is a community cycling club. It's thriving, despite being formed just two years ago. It came about because Daniel Mintz, Shazima Tejani and Mario wanted to bring off-road riding into the heart of London.

'One of the big drivers behind the club was the construction of the new Lordship Loop bike track as part of the regeneration of Lordship Rec' in Tottenham. A key objective of the club was to work with Haringey Council to deliver a progressive multi-skill track that could be ridden by riders of all abilities. We now have a 390-metre long pump-track for BMXes and MTBs right in the middle of Tottenham.'

If you build it, to paraphrase The Field of

Dreams, they will come. 'We've been lucky to have met so many friends and helpers who joined in,' says Mario. 'We offered our first free weekly coaching sessions for kids with a CTC Mountain Bike Skills Instructor back in February 2010, and have been running these pretty much ever since.'

'Working with support from Bike Club has enabled The Trax to continue to grow, with the funding spent on more bikes and equipment to enable locals without them to take part. We've also arranged training for the volunteers, so they can work with the

**“Since we started, over 180 local kids have come to our coaching sessions”**

growing numbers coming along.'

The growth over the last couple of years has been rapid. Mario explains: 'At our first session, nine kids turned up. Two of those still turn up every Saturday and one of them has since become a qualified cycling coach himself. Since we started, over 180 kids from the local community have come along to our

coaching sessions and races. Every Saturday, throughout the year, we are now running three one-and-a-half hour coaching sessions, delivered by 10 fully qualified coaches. These sessions range from beginner cycling sessions to BMX-specific coaching. We are coaching around 30-40 kids every weekend for free. Kids can even borrow bikes from us at no charge.

'Providing opportunities for the local community is what The Trax set out to do. This is the case not only for the members of our Bike Club-supported youth club, who learn new bike skills every weekend, or the girls and women who come to our rides to build their confidence on a bike, but also for the local volunteers who are obtaining official coaching qualifications, gaining experience in organising events or even managing entire new projects – like opening a new bike workshop.'

The Lordship Loop is the foundation of the club, but there's much more to the club's success than that. As Mario says, 'The Trax provides the platform. It's the people who bring along the ideas and energy to turn this into such an amazing project with many different facets.' 🌀

**Find out more online at [thetrax.co.uk](http://thetrax.co.uk)**