

Chief Executive

THE CYCLISTS' CHAMPION

Cycling UK has been supporting, promoting, and defending cycling for 140 years. Cause for celebration, says **Paul Tuohy**



PAUL TUOHY
Chief Executive



Paul Tuohy at the Bike Week launch with Jeremy Vine

Photo: Calvin Cheung

WHAT A SUMMER we are having! I've just returned from my hols in France and never saw a cloud. My wife and I rode our tandem most days. The roads were smooth and motorists gave us notably more room when passing. There were signs advising drivers to give cyclists 1.5m when overtaking, and doing so appeared to be the norm. Very refreshing!

Here in the UK, we have also been basking in glorious sunshine. More and more people have got on their bikes to make the most of it. It's what we all want, and it's great to see as we approach a very special date. On 5 August, Cycling UK will be 140 years old! This magnificent landmark got me thinking that we are still championing cycling today, just as we were when Queen Victoria was on the throne. The influence and impact our supporters have had past and present, in three different centuries, is amazing. We are arguably even more relevant today than we've ever been, in a changed world of mass car production, increasing pollution, sedentary lifestyles, and associated health issues.

In the 19th century, CTC provided legal defence for cyclists charged unjustly for

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highway infractions or injured in accidents. One of the best known cases backed by us then was Lady Harberton's action against the landlady of the Hautboy Hotel in Ockham, who had refused her service for wearing 'rational dress'. In 2018, meanwhile, we've been celebrating and promoting women's cycling in our Women's Festival of Cycling, which you can read more about in this issue.

DRIVING CHANGE

Our safety advocacy is needed now more than ever, as we campaign for better and safer roads and to lift bans on cycling in parks. Only last month ministers announced that, thanks to our supporters responding to the Department of Transport's safety

review, driving instructors are to be offered bespoke training on cycle safety, and police forces will be provided with training materials and support to educate drivers on safely passing cyclists. A massive thank you to the 10,800 members and supporters who made this happen. You accounted for over 80% of all responses. Without you, I doubt anything positive would have happened. No other organisation fights the fight for cycling like Cycling UK and our supporters.

By the time you read this, Cycling UK's Bike Week will have inspired over 300,000 people to get cycling. BBC presenter and avid cycle commuter Jeremy Vine gave the event an enthusiastic launch, along with Cycling Minister Jesse Norman.

Our Big Bike Revival programme in Scotland and England has engaged with over 150 projects to get people back onto their bikes. Such has been its success that at a recent conference attended by the Transport Minister, Chris Boardman and Andy Burnham, it was Cycling UK who were seen as the UK's specialists in getting people to take up cycling. We've come a long way since we rebranded as Cycling UK, but clearly the message is getting through!

Of course, cycle touring in all its forms is still very much in our DNA. You can read the excellent adventures some of us had bikepacking the 100-mile off-road Dorset Gravel Dash in this issue.

Finally, if you want to take part in a little bit of our history, why not come and join me at our Big Bike Celebration in October? It's in Harrogate, and we'll be visiting the very spot where history was made 140 year ago. On 5 August 1878, a forward-thinking group of high-wheel enthusiasts held the first meeting of The Bicycle Touring Club (BTC).

We've evolved over the years, changing our name to the Cyclists' Touring Club in 1883 and then as a charity to Cycling UK in 2016. But as you can see, our founding principles are as central to what we do today as they have always been.

Enjoy your summer of cycling. Let's hope it's a long hot one.