

Profile

Robert Murphy

After decades as a member, **Robert Murphy** has left a legacy to the charity in his will. He told Senior Philanthropy Officer Harry Deacon why

"I'VE ALWAYS had a bike. There's a family photo of me aged four on my Raleigh trike. One day, aged five, I decided that I would meet my dad on his way home from work. I rode my trike, alone, for about two miles across town. I didn't meet my dad that day but I did meet the police, who returned me safely home. My interest in long-distance cycling had begun!"

Robert Murphy has been cycling for as long as he can remember. Growing up in Middlesbrough, he and his friends formed the Acklam Wheelers. They explored the countryside on Saturday rides and gradually pushed themselves further afield. Inspired by the CTC Gazettes he discovered in youth hostels, Robert joined CTC in April 1969, opening the door to a whole new world of cycling.

"Two of the original members of Acklam Wheelers subsequently joined me in CTC activities. Early that summer, we went on our own training-cum-test run. Our training ride was of the order of 240 miles. I spent the next day in bed but made it into school on the Monday."

These formative experiences led to his membership of the Hardriders section of Teesside CTC, which was known for its challenging, long-distance rides. As one of the youngest members, Robert quickly found himself riding alongside more experienced cyclists who pushed him further than he had ever imagined possible. The club became a place of mentorship and camaraderie, where shared miles built lasting friendships.

Summer rides could stretch to 100 miles in a day, taking in the North York

Moors and beyond. Winter brought its own traditions: fixed-wheel bikes, tough conditions and a shared sense of determination. Reliability trials tested endurance to the limit, including rides of up to 260 miles in 24 hours. These weren't just physical challenges but defining experiences that shaped Robert's confidence and resilience.

"I joined the Hardriders in April 1969. I was the youngest member. For reasons I can't explain, I am still the youngest member."

Over the decades, cycling remained a thread running through Robert's life. While much has changed since those early days – routes, equipment, even the club itself – the sense of belonging and shared purpose has endured. When Robert took early retirement in 2014, it marked the start

Clockwise from top left: Robert (left) as a teenager in 1972. Col du Galibier, 1997. On his trike in 1959



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of a new chapter. With more time to reflect, and following his marriage in 2015, he decided to review his will.

"All this change prompted me to review my will. At the time of writing, I have left £750 as a legacy to the Cyclists' Touring Club. I'll try to explain why. The club has been a constant in my life, its members a source of advice and inspiration. I owe them a lot."

For Robert, leaving a gift in his will felt, he says, like a natural step. After a lifetime of cycling, friendships, and challenges shaped by CTC (and latterly Cycling UK) activities, it was a way to recognise something that had quietly been there all along, a constant presence, from childhood adventures to later life. ●