

Birthday invitation

For a full list of events over the next two months, turn to page 68

The 2008 CTC Birthday Rides will take place from 2nd-9th August in the heart of the Cotswolds in the 13th-century market town of Moreton-in-Marsh. The Birthday Rides are a cross between cycle touring and a family summer holiday, and the venue this year has excellent facilities. The National Fire Service College is a 550-acre estate with a swimming pool, sports hall, squash courts, restaurants, lounges, bars, even a bowling alley.

Every day there will be a choice of self-led rides, on road and off, which have been designed by local CTC members with an in-depth knowledge of the area. As well as the classic, honey-coloured Cotswold stone villages and hamlets, rides will take in Saxon churches, woodland, lavender fields, and a falconry exhibition. Destinations will include Stow on the Wold, Bourton on the Water, Chipping Campden and Shipston on Stour. Mile-eaters will have a choice of audax rides to the Vale of Evesham, the Marlborough Downs and the Malvern Hills.

Many rides will be geared towards families, and just for children there will be a mini-touring competition, which will include cyclo-cross, audax challenges, treasure hunts, map reading and more. There's also a 'splash night' for children, as well as five-a-side indoor football, squash and badminton.

Evening events will include films, a ceilidh, visits to the local Hook Norton Brewery, and quiz nights. Or you can do your own thing, relaxing in one of the bars and chewing over the day's adventures. For wet or rest days there will be visits to Shakespeare's Stratford on Avon, Blenheim Palace, Oxford's dreaming spires and Gloucester. And, of course, there's the famous CTC Birthday Tea when riders will gather to celebrate CTC's 130th birthday.

For this eight-day holiday there's a choice of twin or double en suite rooms with tea and coffee making facilities and TV. These three-



Photo: jason@cycling-images.co.uk

star hotel-standard rooms are available half board. Fully-equipped disabled rooms are available. The price includes the registration pack, route sheets and most social events. Campers have the option to buy evening meals separately, with breakfast included in

the price. All special diets are catered for.

Prices start at £184 per person. For details, see the advert in this issue or download the Birthday Rides pack from www.birthdayrides.org. Contact co-ordinator Mel Luxton at br@luxton.f9.co.uk, tel: 0113 262 2328.

EVENTS IN BRIEF

WHITE HORSE WEEKEND

Revisit the rolling Wiltshire countryside that's home to the David Duffield Challenge Ride when Chippenham Wheelers run the long-established White Horse Weekend from 4th-6th April.

There is a social evening on Friday, followed by rides on Saturday and Sunday. Catering is provided by members during and after the rides. Saturday evening gives the option of slide show or a lively quiz, while the Sunday ride finishes with a late lunch. Details from John Else, 1 St Peter's Close, Chippenham, SN15 2BQ, tel: 01249 650215

RUN, BIKE, SWIM

The Triathlon, Cycling & Running Show takes place at Sandown Park near London on 9th and 10th February. There are over 100 retailers and brands exhibiting at TCR08. You'll be able to try out the latest bikes on CTC's test track and attend seminars and workshops from top specialists. Ride to the show and take advantage of free bike storage, a bike clean and lube courtesy of CycleDoctor and CTC. Tickets are £7.50 in advance, £10 on the door (£9.00 with CTC Membership Card) and under-16s are free. See www.tcrshow.com or tel: 01932 267301.

Northern Ireland awaits

Northern Ireland will host CTC's annual general meeting for the first time on Saturday 26th April. The AGM, which takes place in the Belfast Grand Opera House, is your chance to meet and quiz CTC Council and to vote on the motions that will be published in the next issue of Cycle.

It's not all business, however. That evening, the CTC National Dinner takes place in the Long Gallery of Stormont Parliament Buildings, home of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Conor Murphy, the Assembly's Regional Development Minister, will attend.

The day after there will be rides in and around Belfast, led by CTC Northern Ireland, which all members are welcome on. For those wanting to extend their stay, the stunning scenery of County Antrim is right on the doorstep. The official cycle tour organised by CTC Cycling Holidays is now full, but there's ample opportunity to create your own. Useful CTC information sheets are: i1 (Ireland, general); i6 (County Donegal); i7 (Circuit of Strangford Lough); and xi1 (Northern Ireland off-road). All are on the website or can be obtained from CTC National Office.

To attend the AGM, you need only bring

a valid CTC membership card. It's free, and refreshments are provided. To attend the dinner, complete the form (below right) and send to CTC Membership, PO Box 510, Unit 8, Fleming Way, Isleworth, TW7 6WP. For more information on the dinner, call the CTC Membership Dept, tel: 0870 873 0061.

There's more information on the AGM weekend on the CTC website, www.ctc.org.uk/agm, including links for accommodation.

GETTING THERE

Although Belfast is across the sea from mainland UK, it's still pretty easy to get there without flying. The shortest ferry journey, suiting those coming from Scotland, is from Stranraer to Belfast (3hr 15min, or 105min for the fast ferry). Travellers from England can catch the Birkenhead (Liverpool) to Belfast ferry (8hr, day or night; bikes have to go aboard ship loaded onto a special trailer), or travel to north Wales for the Holyhead to Dublin/Dun Laighore crossing (3hr 15min, or 109min for the fast ferry), then catch the train or coach to get to Belfast. There are a few other options too – such as Fishguard to Rosslare, or Troon to Larne. More details on the website, www.ctc.org.uk/agm.

If you're driving, you can save money by car-sharing with other CTC members. To get in touch, use the CTC message board – phone National Office if you don't have internet access. Guidance for cycling in from the two airports will be available soon.

Please send me _____ tickets @ £26 each for the CTC National Dinner on Saturday 26th April. (Cheques should be made out to 'CTC')

Names of those attending (use another sheet if necessary). Please put a letter V in brackets, like this (V), after the name of any vegetarians.

I would like details on local accommodation

Yes No

I will be taking part in the Sunday rides

Yes No

Name and address

Tel _____

Email _____



Photo: courtesy of Cycle Northern Ireland

CTC TOURIST COMPETITION 2008

After 26 years it's all change for the DATC competition. The new 'CTC Tourist Competition' has more than 400 events nationwide, covering all aspects of riding from fun events, 50km rides, off-road routes to overnight rides of 600km.

Under a revised scoring system designed to broaden its appeal, members select up to 10 events to become the 'Best All Rounder'

with trophies for the first man, woman, veteran, junior girl and boy. A certificate is awarded for under-12s completing 250km or more and for over-12s completing at least 500km. Bronze, silver and gold Mille Miglia medallions are awarded to riders completing a total of 1,000, 2,000 and 3,000km in CTC Tourist Competition events. For details, see www.ctc-competitions.org.uk.