

CYCLE NEWS

CTC'S ROUND UP OF CYCLING NEWS, VIEWS AND EVENTS



It's a record!

CTC's membership figure now eclipses the previous record set at the end of the Nineteenth Century



This summer CTC surpassed the membership record set back in the 'Golden Age' of cycling in 1899, when cars were a rarity. Today CTC has 60,776 members and supports 10,000 more cyclists in affiliated groups, while CTC's charitable work has helped a further 20,000 beneficiaries. The membership in 1899 was 60,449.

CTC Director Kevin Mayne said: 'I am delighted we have reached the highest membership in our history. Membership helps make CTC unique and gives us our independent and democratic voice, as we are 60,000 people united by a passion for cycling.'

The membership figures reflect the fact that there have never been more cyclists showing their support for CTC's campaigning for a better deal for UK cyclists. CTC's most recent victory was when the Government's draft Road Safety Strategy backed CTC's call for a target to halve the risks of cycling within 10 years.

CTC membership levels have always been a barometer of cycling in the UK, and official government figures published on 24th June show an increase in the numbers of people cycling to the highest level for 17 years. From 2007 to 2008, cycling increased by 12%, at the same time

as a substantial fall in cycling deaths, down from 136 to 115, the second lowest level ever. Serious and slight injuries rose but only by 1%.

The government figures add weight to the central message in CTC's Safety in Numbers campaign, CTC Policy Coordinator Chris Peck said. 'Official statistics prove that cycling is on the rise in Britain, yet casualties don't appear to be rising at the same rate. This bears out CTC's Safety in Numbers campaign which shows increased levels of cycling and safety go hand in hand.'

See the story on page 8, A Safer Way, for more on the Safety in Numbers campaign.

That was then, this is now: Veteran Cycle Club members pose with CTC staff and ex-president Ted King at York Cycle Show

NEWS IN BRIEF

CYCLING ACTION PLAN FOR SCOTLAND

The Scottish Government has issued its draft Cycling Action Plan for Scotland for consultation, including an ambitious target to increase cycle use to 10% of trips by 2010. Meanwhile, a series of 'Smarter Choices, Smarter Places' projects has been launched in seven areas, aimed at encouraging people to switch from car use to sustainable transport. The £15m programme, modelled on the Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns project, is running in Dundee, Glasgow's east end, Falkirk, Dumfries, East Renfrewshire, East Dumbartonshire and Orkney.

FILLTHATHOLE TRACKS CHANGES

CTC's fillthathole.org.uk website now has a direct link so cyclists can send reports on level crossing surfaces that are in poor condition to Network Rail, who look after most of the 1,500 public road level crossings in the UK. From a position near the bottom of the 209 listed authorities, Network Rail are now in 8th place for getting things fixed.

LONDON-BRIGHTON BIKE PROVISION

The Southern rail franchise (primarily London, West Sussex, East Sussex, Surrey) has been retained by Govia. The contract requires the installation of 1,500 extra cycle parking places. For the first time since the ban in 2004, cycles were officially allowed on some Southern trains on the date of the London to Brighton Bike ride this June.



FROM CTC DIRECTOR **KEVIN MAYNE**



For 131 years, CTC's membership level has been a monitor of the state of cycling in the UK. In 1899 cycling

was the fashion of the day, supported by the aristocracy, the professional classes and those who set the mood of the day. Yet within just 10 years, many of those same people had switched to cars and CTC only just survived as a cycling organisation.


And at our last peak in 1950, cycling was the transport of delight for a generation released from the war but still living in austerity. Shortly afterwards, the replacement of bicycles by cars started and CTC's membership dropped for nearly 20 years, and it only began to recover again in the 1970s and '80s.

I think we can be much more confident about today's CTC and today's cycling. All of the factors working in our society tell us that we are not about to be usurped by a new and 'more glamorous' choice of transport. Cycling is a solution to obesity, to climate change, and to congestion; the changes we need to make in our society must include cycling in order to succeed.

While we maintain our traditions of membership, campaigning and leisure cycling, there is a new side to CTC, one that sees thousands of people introduced to cycling by our work. It's cycling's secret ingredient – enjoyment. It's fashionable to call it 'wellbeing', a combination of physical and mental health, but whatever it is called, we all know that when we put people on bikes, they smile. That's something very special.

Thank you for your support and enjoy your cycling.

Killer driver escapes prison

 CTC has condemned a judge's decision to reduce a driver's sentence because the cyclist he killed wasn't wearing a helmet. James Jorgensen died of serious head injuries eight days after driver Denis Moore collided with him on a roundabout in Seaham, County Durham. Although the court was told that Moore was only driving at around 20mph, his solicitor acknowledged that his client had suffered a 'momentary lapse of concentration'.

Judge Richard Lowden gave Moore a 24-week suspended prison sentence, saying that the fact that Jorgensen had not been wearing a helmet was 'a mitigating factor' and that Moore's sentence would be reduced accordingly. The judge reached this decision without hearing any evidence about the effectiveness of helmets, or whether a helmet would have made any difference.


CTC's Campaigns & Policy Manager Roger Geffen said: 'There are still serious doubts about the effectiveness of cycle helmets, particularly in preventing serious or fatal injuries, and wearing them is not compulsory. This sentence is an extraordinary example of a judge blaming the victim for his own death.'

The decision is sadly reminiscent of a recent civil law case (Smith v Finch), where High Court Judge Griffith Williams gave his opinion that, in principle, helmetless cyclists could face reduced damages if it were shown that wearing one would have prevented or reduced their injuries. Nevertheless, he concluded that in the case in question, a helmet would not have prevented the cyclist's serious injuries.



Left: Helen Biggerstaff, Reading Cycle Champion

Deaf & disabled cyclists' group


 Several CTC members, with the support of CTC Council member, Barry Jordan, are proposing to create a new member group, CTC Inclusive Cycling Forum for Deaf and Disabled People (including people with long term health conditions).

The Forum's purpose is to make it as easy as possible for our group to access, experience and enjoy the benefits of cycling by providing a focal point for discussion, a source of information and personal stories, and a campaigning voice to remove barriers that inhibit the group's purpose. The Forum aims to promote and demonstrate what's possible, and to help all in our group to enjoy cycling as individual ability allows.

An inaugural meeting of the proposed group will be held on Saturday 5th September 2009 at Park United Reform Church Hall, Palmer Park Avenue, Wokingham Rd, Reading RG6 1DN. The meeting will elect officers and a committee. An application to form the group will then be submitted to the club's Director for approval by CTC Council. The group is open to all CTC members.

If you are interested in joining this group or attending the meeting, please contact Nigel Williams via CTC National Office or by email: nigel.williams@ctc.org.uk

Back on track?

 Gordon Brown has promised that his Government will draw up a National Cycle Plan and an Active Transport Strategy during the coming months. The National Cycle Plan will be created by the Department for Transport (DfT), and the DfT will collaborate with the Department of Health in preparing the Active Transport Strategy. The news came as part of the Prime Minister's plans for 'Building Britain's Future', announced in early July.

As Cycle went to press, we were awaiting news of the timescales and consultation arrangements for producing these documents. We were also awaiting news of the DfT's carbon reduction strategy, which is also likely to highlight the role of cycling.

Whilst the Government's renewed interest in cycling is welcome, there is a risk that these documents could end up being hastily prepared, with more of an eye to the electoral cycle than on cycling itself. Less cynically, these announcements may also reflect the genuine interests of Lord Adonis following his promotion (from junior transport minister) to Secretary of State for Transport.

Lord Adonis has been quick to show real enthusiasm for his ministerial brief. His first speech as Transport Secretary set out a vision that focused strongly on promoting low-carbon transport, with a particular emphasis on cycling, rail and cycle-rail integration.



His speech included photos he had taken while cycling round London to look at the poor state of cycle parking at London's main stations. He then announced £5m of new funding to improve the situation (see page 50).

CTC had written to Lord Adonis shortly before he made his speech, setting out some of the key points made in our New Vision for Cycling (announced earlier this year), our current Safety in Numbers campaign and our Keep Cycling on Track agenda for promoting the cycle-rail combination.

Meanwhile the political parties are getting to work on their election manifestos. CTC will be the messages contained in our New Vision for Cycling (see www.ctc.org.uk/newvision), with additional detail on road safety and on cycle-rail integration at www.ctc.org.uk/safetyinnumbers and www.ctc.org.uk/keepcyclingontrack respectively.

FROM THE TOURING DEPT MARK WATERS



CTC's 5th East Midlands Rally took place over the Whitsun Bank Holiday. Most of the riders were

local and for them the rally was a regular event in their cycling diaries. Not so for me: I'd come up from Surrey for two reasons – to meet the new British Cycle Quest volunteer who lived close by in Rutland and secondly to experience cycling in Leicestershire. What better way than at a cycle rally?

The campsite was at Beaumanor Hall, south of Loughborough in the Charnwood Forest, and it was perfect for this weekend. Ray Clay, secretary of the local group, did a marvellous job with the organisation and was always on hand. Notable attendees were councillor John Cutler and organiser of this year's Birthday Rides, Max Scott.

Rides of two different distances were organised for the Saturday and Sunday to suit the mixed ability crowd. I went on the two longer rides and enjoyed some great cycling as far west as Bosworth Battlefield and as far east as the Vale of Beauvoir. All the café stops were good and there was the opportunity of viewing one or two local points of interest (not to mention gathering several BCQ answers).

My only regret was that there were fewer than 40 people there. Are cycle rallies dwindling in popularity, or is it a lack of awareness that they're taking place? Whichever it is, put this one in your diary for next year now!



A Safer Way

The Government has finished consulting on 'A Safer Way', a road safety strategy for the next 20 years. In preparation for this, CTC launched its 'Safety in Numbers' campaign, calling on the Government to acknowledge the effect that increased levels of cycling coincides with reduced risks to cyclists.

CTC members wrote in their thousands to MPs asking them to support the campaign and many have also responded directly to the consultation. So far 193 MPs have signed Early Day Motion (EDM) 1431 which supports the 'Safety in Numbers' campaign. Out of thousands of EDMs this one is now the 25th most popular.

The draft strategy accepted one of the key proposals put forward by CTC in 'Safety in Numbers' – that targets for cycle safety should be based on the risk of injury or death, not overall numbers of injuries. There's also support for making 20mph the normal speed limit in urban areas, bringing the UK into line with common practice elsewhere in Europe.

CTC's response is at: www.ctc.org.uk/asafeway



SHEFFIELD

Cycling paramedics' success

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Jonathan had the idea of a cycling paramedic service in Sheffield city centre. (Plenty of time to hone ripostes to the wry comments he was expecting from the public). In 2000, paramedic and former BMX cycling champion Tom Lynch had launched the first 'Cycle Response Unit' in London, and Jonathan, a teacher and keen competitive cyclist, was looking for a change of career.

Pedal Ready.

The idea of a cycling ambulance in England's hilliest city was viewed with some scepticism at first, but Jonathan's persistence paid off after the merging of the Yorkshire services, and the Sheffield Cycle Response Unit was launched for a three month trial last autumn.

The service aim is to reach 75% of life threatening incidents within eight minutes. Jonathan's average response time for these incidents is under four minutes – less than half the time.

The initial run of the CRU (as it's called – the Sheffield public seem to prefer 'ambulance bikes') has proved so successful that the trial has been extended to a year. And Jonathan has been joined by fellow cycling paramedic Tim Atkin.

‘So how are you going to get me to hospital on the back of that, then?’ Paramedic Jonathan Alexander has a ready reply: ‘It's simple. I take the kit out, fold you in half and put you in the panniers.’

Nine years ago, CTC member

‘After seeing it happen in London, it had always been my dream to be a cycling paramedic after I joined the ambulance service,’ said Jonathan, who is also a member of the local cycle campaign and is a cycle trainer with Sheffield's training co-op,

NEWS IN BRIEF

COXWOLD CO-ORDINATOR NEEDED

CTC North Yorkshire and Teesside groups are urgently seeking a new volunteer co-ordinator, to ensure the continuation of the annual Coxwold Cyclists' Service, held each May. Liaison is needed with the church, village hall and CTC members who manage the organ playing, bell ringing and choir singing. Contact Eddie Grainger (tel: 01642 312921) or outgoing co-ordinator Anne Atkinson, tel: 01609 777329, email anne.onherbike@virgin.net

OFF YER BIKE

Last year, Sam O'Shea made the national news after St Paul's Primary School in Portsmouth barred him from cycling to school due to concerns about safety. As a result of campaigning by Sam and his parents, Portsmouth City Council re-designed the road by the school and offered to install cycle parking. The school has not taken up the offer and insists the road is not safe, contrary to the findings of a recent risk assessment. If you have encountered resistance to cycling to school or university, email CTC's Campaigns Co-ordinator Debra Rolfe: debra.rolfe@ctc.org.uk

LONDON & NATIONAL

Shop local with CTC

Condor Cycles in London, which was named Best Independent Retailer of the Year 2008 by cycle industry magazine BikeBiz, is the latest shop to offer a 10% discount on selected equipment lines to CTC members. Condor Cycles joins more than 180 other UK shops offering this facility. Finding your nearest one is easy: visit www.ctc-maps.org.uk/cyclists_welcome and search under 'find a location' or phone 0844 736 8450 to request a printed list. If your local shop offers a CTC discount and isn't listed, let us know.

To claim your CTC discount you must show a valid CTC membership card. Condor Cycles has just been extensively refurbished with a custom bike fitting area, extended bike and equipment displays, and new changing rooms. More details at www.condorcycles.com.



Trails kept open NORTHUMBERLAND & WREXHAM

CTC campaigners have kept open threatened rights of way in Northumberland and Wrexham. In Northumberland, volunteer campaigner David Roberts notched up another win when Tyndale Magistrates Court ruled at a hearing on 2nd July that an application by Northumberland County Council to stop up Healy Byway 15 was unacceptable.

Meanwhile Colin Palmer, CTC's national advisor on rights of way issues, persuaded the local council to reject an application to downgrade a Wrexham bridleway.

The Healy win follows on from David's recent success in getting a stile removed from Bellingham Bridleway 4, which forms part of the Pennine Way. The bridleway had long been

illegally blocked by a stile. David encountered delays in getting the Council to remove it, only to learn later that the landowner was a County Councillor and Chair of the Northumberland National Park Authority! No progress was made until the Byways and Bridleways Trust backed up David by submitting a legal notice to the Council. The stile was removed.

SPEEDING CYCLISTS

Cyclists enjoying the promenade in Bournemouth have been targeted by police out with a speed gun to enforce the 10mph speed limit there. As most cyclists don't have speedometers, 'offenders' get a telling off and a leaflet, but not a fine.