

FROM CTC'S CHIEF EXEC

# BACK TO CYCLING

*Chief Executive Paul Tuohy reflects on getting back on his bike – and on encouraging others to do the same*



**AS CYCLISTS**, we are acutely aware of the perils of vehicles turning left. Left-turning HGVs have killed a number of cyclists this year, leading to questions about their design and their blind spots. Five months ago, I was hit by a young car driver turning left while I was commuting home from London to Kent by motorbike. He said he didn't see me. I have no recollection of what happened, just of waking up in hospital where I spent the next month. I suffered three broken vertebrae, a broken foot, and a post-op infection.

The first thing I was able to do when released was a gentle hundred yards on my Brompton. Roll on three months and I'm able to ride my touring bike 30-40 miles. I'm very much on the mend and firmly back in the groove with CTC. I'd like to thank everyone for their goodwill messages of support. The best part about a return to normality was a family ride in August with my wife Wendy and my two sons, who had returned home for the weekend. You can't beat a family ride on a brilliant summer's day!

On my first week back at work, it was wonderful to meet up with Trustees and Councillors and engage with members at our annual AGM. I was privileged to present awards to some amazing CTC riders whose commitment to helping others to ride is often unsung and unnoticed. Well done, all you award winners! Your commitment to cycling, and the joy it brings, is inspirational.

Member engagement is something we'd like to improve on. We are looking closely at ways to help CTC members interact with each other more, should they wish to do so. The majority of our near-70,000 members and supporters ride as individuals. But some might want to ride with a local group, campaign in their area for improved cycling facilities, undertake specific training, seek general advice and so on. We're looking at ways to facilitate these objectives.

On 10 October, we will be hosting our first annual members' conference at Warwick University to gather opinions from the very heart of CTC. We want your views and



● Out of hospital and on the mend, Paul enjoyed a family bike ride in August

thoughts to fuel our plans to build and grow CTC for what it really is: the home of cycling. As I keep saying to anyone who cares to listen: 'If you ride – join!' We have something to offer for anyone keen to cycle, and we have a heritage and history unrivalled. We are running six workshops as part of our members' conference. These are designed to share best-practice examples from local groups, members and volunteers, and to equip you with the resources and know-how to take forward the support and promotion of CTC in your area. Do come along if you can.

Finally, I was hugely encouraged to hear from my contacts in Government and other organisations we work with that people are noticing a change in CTC's outlook. They can see we are embracing a more modern approach in encouraging cycling for all. The Big Bike Rival (BBR), funded by a grant from

the Department for Transport, was a key factor. It also proved to the Government that we can deliver a big project on time and with a myriad of benefits. Over 30,000 people re-engaged with cycling during the BBR. We also helped re-invigorate trade at participating local bike centres. I shall be meeting Government officials soon and will be asking for additional funding to help build on the legacy of BBR – which would help the Government meet its own objectives to 'get Britain cycling'.

Enjoy what's left of the fading daylight hours and make sure you're lights are ready to glow as we pedal into autumn. My unfortunate accident may have dented my body, but it's not dented my ambition for cyclists to be given more respect on our roads. It's something that I will continue to shine a light on. ●

**“On 10 October, we will be hosting our first annual members' conference to gather opinions from the heart of CTC. Do come along if you can”**