



(Clockwise from far left) At the launch of CTC's Safety in Numbers campaign, with Jon Snow, Roger Geffen, and Gwyn Prosser MP. Cycling through London on his battered hack bike. Bikeability comes to Wales. Throughout the UK, it reaches half a million children a year



# KEVIN MAYNE

**AFTER 14 YEARS WITH CTC, CHIEF EXECUTIVE KEVIN MAYNE IS MOVING TO A JOB WITH THE EUROPEAN CYCLISTS' FEDERATION. DAN JOYCE SPOKE TO HIM BEFORE HE LEFT IN APRIL**

**C**TC today looks like a different organisation from the one Kevin Mayne inherited when he joined as Director in February 1998. It's larger for one thing, with 68,500 individual members compared with 44,000, but the bigger shift is of focus.

'It's opened up,' says Kevin. 'I don't think CTC in the 1990s was closed to anybody, but it didn't feel open. If you looked at the magazine or the materials the club produced, it was inescapably "Cyclists' Touring Club". In 1999, we made a conscious decision to use the phrase "the national cyclists' organisation". And now it is clear that CTC is for mountain bikers and commuters and sportive riders too.'

Some will portray this as a shift away from CTC's roots. Kevin isn't having any of it. 'When I arrived, CTC had just completed a member survey. Even then, there were more members commuting than touring. There were more members riding with other cycling clubs than riding with CTC's member groups. And even then there were 20-30% mountain bikes in the membership.'

This wasn't just a late 20th Century development either, Kevin says. 'If you go back to the whole of our history, CTC was a vibrant campaigning, dynamic organisation,

that was far more than a cyclists' touring club. The first people ever to cycle the Three Peaks, as far as anybody knows, were Bradford CTC members in the Fifties. It was CTC that saved bridleways for bike use, way before mountain bikes. But when I came in 1998, the magazine didn't reflect this diverse club.'

While CTC has long been a broad church, one significant change in the last decade has been to reach out deliberately to new cyclists. Much of this has been conducted

**“CTC has always been far more than a cyclists' touring club”**

through project work, such as Bike Club and Cycle Champions.

'When I joined CTC, the then press officer said: "CTC's worst nightmare is a 14-year-old girl on a mountain bike." It would have been obvious to both sides that she was a fish out of water. Yet now we've got 14-year-old girls on mountain bikes doing cycle tours for the Duke of Edinburgh Award, facilitated by CTC. That's exciting.'

It's not just young cyclists either. CTC is making cycling available to members of society who can gain massively from it but who might have had limited opportunity to try it in the past – those with health problems, for example, or those with cultural or social barriers that could prevent them cycling. Getting these people on bikes is rewarding not only for them but also for the wider society.

'At CTC's Leeds roadshow last winter,' says Kevin, 'there was a chap from a mental health scheme in Sheffield. He was explaining all the benefits of this programme and how effectively society gained by £16,000 per week every time we kept somebody out of a mental health institution. One of the health professionals in the room asked what was so special about cycling. And he replied: "I don't know. But they come along and they ride the bikes and they talk to each other, and they feel better. And it works."'

Cycling programmes like this are clearly charitable. Ah, there's that word: charity. It's dominated a couple of AGMs and lots of column inches in Cycle, and it's been the spark for some furious arguments on web forums. Kevin is philosophic. 'The point about the charity debate is that the decision to go for charitable status reflected who and >





(Clockwise from far left) Enjoying a cyclist's breakfast with CTC colleague Mark Waters. Last year's Birthday Rides in Suffolk – the trike meant Murphy the dog could go too. Addressing the media during CTC's campaign to keep posties cycling

» what CTC already was. It's not a change. The vast majority of members are people who want to share cycling and believe that it is a force for good.'

Yet there was resistance, with some members wanting to put the brakes on the transition to a charity. 'There's a very small group saying "my cycling is the only true path",' says Kevin. 'I think part of the challenge is getting people to lift their heads from the 10 or 20 people they know, and reflect on the fact that cycling is really broad and pivotal.'

There have been other issues over the years, as you'd expect from a decade and a half. Foot and mouth had dangerous financial implications. A membership services contractor was sacked due to poor service. But Kevin is upbeat when looking back.

'Professionally, CTC is in a much better shape. It wasn't just our building that was creaking at the seams from time to time.'

Personally, it's CTC's impact on people he's happiest with. 'I am really excited when CTC reaches out. I'm enormously pleased with the Volunteer of the Year: it shows off the very best of CTC.'

Asked to name a specific external achievement from the Mayne years, Kevin picks Bikeability. 'Before 1999, cycle training had become a lost backwater. Some people were doing brilliant things, but nobody

noticed. Between 1999 and 2004, I convinced the National Cycling Strategy Board, then Cycling England, and then Government that this was a strategic opportunity, not riding round cones on playgrounds. Bikeability now gets £11 million a year.

'People say we'll never get Dutch levels of cycling unless we get Dutch infrastructure. And I support the need for good infrastructure. But back in the late 1990s, the question was: what can we do now? Are we seriously going to wait 20 years? Through training, £11 million a year reaches half a

## **“Cycle training was a lost backwater. Bikeability changed that”**

million children. Proper Dutch infrastructure could cost £11 million for one city!

To invest 14 years of your life with an organisation like CTC, you have to be a committed cyclist. Kevin is. He comes from a cycling family. 'We time trialled, we toured, we were car free for a long time. My earliest memories are waking up beside the A12 because dad was riding a time trial.' At university, he was secretary and chairman of

the cycling club in different years.

He's not abandoning cycling now, either. He's leaving CTC to join the European Cyclists' Federation as Development Director. 'My management role is things like communications, fund-raising and project development, some of the stuff I've enjoyed at CTC. And I'm responsible for the development of cycling groups throughout Europe, and supporting countries where there is less of a campaigning culture.

'Cycle advocacy is a very northwest European concept. There are big strong organisations in Holland and Germany, and the further south and east you go, they're relatively small. This year I'm working with Italy, Poland and Ukraine.'

The new job will involve moving to Brussels this autumn, where he hopes to join Belgian cyclists on touring rides into the Flanders countryside. As for the old job: 'It's been an extraordinarily important part of my life. It's had its ups and downs, but it is and was my dream job. I just want to say "thank you" to the brilliant people in all parts of the organisation, especially the Councillors who have supported me and the amazing staff I have been lucky enough to lead for the last 14 years. Their passion for our work has been my inspiration.'

**Kevin's blog is: [idonotdespair.com](http://idonotdespair.com)**