

MTB training gears up

CTC's mountain bike portfolio grows with the acquisition of OTC Training



CTC acquired mountain bike training company OTC Training shortly after the last issue of Cycle went to press. This exciting development will combine OTC's highly-regarded range of qualifications with CTC's existing off-road skills courses. It will allow OTC's staff, including the company's founder Dan Cook and its 4,000 accredited mountain bike leaders, to access the resources of the UK's largest cycling organisation.

OTC's training and education programme will complement CTC's growing mountain bike portfolio. This already includes skills training, off-road campaigning, advising local groups and commercial operators, community outreach, and project managing and designing new trails, overseen by Ian Warby. Year on year, more mountain bikers are joining CTC and currently 27,000 CTC members own a mountain bike.

CTC Director Kevin Mayne said: 'OTC's training and education programme is a perfect addition to CTC's growing range of mountain bike activities. We are looking forward to welcoming OTC into CTC and working to improve conditions for mountain bikers of all abilities. This acquisition is just the start. The mountain bike world is going to be hearing a lot more from CTC in the coming years.'

Founder and Director of OTC Dan Cook said: 'Integrating with CTC will provide a fantastic future for mountain bikers, professional activity providers, voluntary group leaders, regular riders and weekend warriors. CTC will now be the only point of contact needed for training, insurance and virtually all recreational services for mountain bikers. Plus CTC's proven record in accessing funding for cycling development can also be harnessed to

benefit mountain biking across the UK.'

Arrangements for OTC activities for 2009 onwards will continue with the same staff in place across the board. Mountain bike activity providers (including some of the biggest names in the sector such as the Forestry Commission, PGL, Thomas Cook, Crystal and numerous local authority outdoor centres) can rest assured that both OTC and CTC are looking to extend and develop opportunities for mountain biking throughout the UK and Europe with existing partners.

OTC's calendar of training courses is being incorporated into CTC. More information can be found on a temporary transitional website: www.promtb.net. Other contact details are already live – tel: 0844 736 8463, email mtb@ctc.org.uk, and by post CTC MTB, PO Box 1506, Sheffield, S6 3XN.

Your local heroes

 Nominations are open for CTC's Volunteer of the Year and Group of the Year Awards. This is your chance to get your local heroes formally recognised and rewarded. In memory of the late Gordon Selway, who championed cycle campaigning for CTC, the Awards Committee have added a new award, 'Local campaigning achievement of the year', open to groups or individuals.

Chair of CTC Council David Robinson said: 'The energy that people like Gordon showed for cycling is what these awards honour. Many of you will know someone who campaigns on local issues, keeps a CTC group running, or leads rides for others. We need you to tell us who they are.' For an entry form, visit www.ctc.org.uk/volunteerawards or phone National Office. Closing date is 1st Feb 09.



FROM THE CAMPAIGNS DEPT **ROGER GEFFEN**



One of my biggest challenges is handling two issues where CTC's stance can seem counter-

intuitive. When forced to speak out about either motorcycling or helmets, I receive a small flurry of emails from people who think we've lost the plot.

CTC members who also ride motorbikes cannot believe our claims that, mile for mile, the rate of involvement of motorcycles in collisions with both pedestrians and cyclists is significantly higher than for cars – all the more so for serious and fatal injuries. Yet that's what the statistics say.

This, and similar evidence that the average motorbike is still more polluting than the average car, backs up CTC's long-established policy of opposing motorbikes in bus lanes. It's one we share with Sustrans, Living Streets, RoadPeace and, crucially, with the London Cycling Campaign who collected a 3,500-signature petition against London Mayor Boris Johnson's plans to allow motorbikes into bus lanes on London's main roads.

CTC sides with motorcyclists on many safety issues where we have common ground. However, their machines can present real hazards, and Boris's plans would doubtless bring a lot more of them of their onto London's roads, increasing pollution while undermining cycle use and cyclists' safety.

London's comprehensive and well-enforced bus lane network has doubtless contributed to the capital's 91% increase in cycle use since 2000. Let's not lose that, nor surrender the possibility of similar growth in other towns and cities before it's even begun.

Report says 20's plenty

 CTC has strongly welcomed calls from the Commons Transport Select Committee to increase the number of 20mph speed limits, for a stronger role for cycle training, and for new road safety targets which support wider health and environmental objectives by encouraging more as well as safer cycling.

The Committee's report 'Ending the Scandal of Complacency: Road Safety beyond 2010' comes out as the Government starts work on a new Road Safety Strategy for the next decade.

One of the Committee's key recommendations is that local authorities should be given more

freedom to introduce 20mph speed limits. CTC believes that 20mph should be the default speed limit for built-up areas, covering residential streets and others where vulnerable road users are present. Local authorities would be free to identify those busier and wider streets where higher limits would apply.

Speed limits of 20mph are popular, with around 75% public support. As well as reducing casualties, they create attractive and secure local communities, giving people of all ages the freedom to adopt the healthy and sustainable options of walking and cycling.

Besides lower speed limits, the Inquiry backed several of the measures which CTC had called for, including:

- Setting road safety targets that encourage more as well as safer cycling, in order to realise its wider health and other benefits. CTC presented strong evidence to the inquiry that cycling gets safer the more people do it, hence 'more' and 'safer' cycling can and should be pursued as complementary objectives.
- Tougher enforcement of traffic laws, including drink-driving.
- Recognising the role that cycle training can play both in encouraging more cycle use and in encouraging safer road behaviour. The Government is currently reviewing the training and testing of novice drivers, and the Committee backed CTC's argument that the Government should have considered how driver safety might be improved if teenagers were encouraged to take cycle training before learning to drive.
- Allowing the police and courts to use cycle training as a sanction for cyclists caught breaking the law, in the same way that offending drivers can already be sent on driver retraining or speed awareness courses.

See www.ctc.org.uk/safety for more.



FROM THE TOURING DEPT MARK WATERS



We continue to make efforts to improve ease of access to touring information on the CTC website. All

600-plus route sheets may now be found on the new CTC Maps site, www.ctc-maps.org.uk, rendering the old system surplus to requirement. The 'INF' information sheets, which cover public transport and information of a more general nature, will still be available from the main site (www.ctc.org.uk).

Updates and recently-sourced information is now being added to the 'Notes' section of route and country information sheets, so don't forget to have a look here before downloading the PDF

Remember: you can still access an alphabetical list of all CTC's route sheets on the CTC Maps site by clicking on 'Cycle Routes' and then 'CTC Route Sheets'.

Look out for a swathe of new route sheets that I am hoping to put up over the winter. These will include all the routes featured in the magazine over the past four years.

A factsheet about CTC's Route and Information Sheets will soon be available as an INF sheet on the website. Or you can phone or email me at National Office: mark.waters@ctc.org.uk, 01483 238305, and I'll send it to you.

Don't forget that as well as downloading routes you can upload your own favourite road and off-road routes to the site, to share them with other CTC members. There are thousands of routes already up there but it would be great if we could get even more. Why not share your knowledge and encourage more people to cycle? Contributions are always very welcome.

Photo: Matt Hodges

Bike-rail awards



CTC's Public Transport Adviser Dave Holladay won the 'People Award' at the ATOC National Cycle-Rail Awards 2008 in London on 7th November. He was presented with his award by world record-breaking cyclist Mark Beaumont (far left).

Dave was singled out for his work to improve access for cyclists on public transport. The judges described Dave as 'one of the best known figures campaigning for cycle rail integration'. They also commented on his recent achievement in persuading Eurostar to improve its booking process to make it easier for cycles to be taken on board, and his current work campaigning for more flexibility in train design.

Also at the Awards, St Albans won CTC Station of the Year. First Capital Connect at St Albans station has redeveloped the cycle parking and added 150 spaces. It has also increased staff visibility around the cycle parking areas, which has led to a 29% reduction in cycle crime.

NEWS IN BRIEF

CTC COUNCIL IN 2009

The last issue of Cycle reported that an election would take place for councillors to represent CTC members in the Yorkshire and Humber Region on Council for the three years from January 2009. Following that election, Council is pleased to welcome Kevan Shuttleworth as a new councillor. He will join existing councillor Arthur Spurr who was re-elected.

SUMMER DRAW

Congratulations to the winners of the CTC Summer Draw. The £2,000 first prize goes to Mr and Mrs Freeman from Reading, second prize (£1,000) to Mr R Windsor of Preston, and third (£500) to Mrs I Lowe from Wigan. Runner-up prizes of £100 go to Miss S MacAuley from Belfast, Ms H Woods of Bristol, Mr H Elliott from London, Mr J Taylor from Powys, and Mr A Hood of Ilkington.

CTC SHOP MOVE

We are in the process of transferring the CTC shop to a new supplier from 1st January 2009. The current email address, telephone and fax numbers for the CTC shop will remain. We are sure that the new supplier will maintain the high levels of service and membership benefits associated with the current provider.

New CTC group

Reinforcing the fact that CTC is a welcoming and open club, a number of gay and lesbian members have created a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) CTC Member Group. The aim is to offer support and rides to other CTC members and to encourage non-members to join.

CTC already has LGBT members active in local club events and the new group would like to encourage more LGBT members to join these. In addition the new group is planning specifically LGBT-focused rides. One already

planned is a London to Brighton Ride to coincide with Brighton Pride on 2nd August 2009. The idea is to finish at the carnival in Preston Park at a large CTC display stand.

Barry Jordan, CTC Councillor and Equality Champion, is the founder of the new group. He looks forward to hearing from more lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender cyclists who want to find out more about the group, be on its mailing list, or offer their help in some way. Contact Barry on hjb536@blueyonder.co.uk.

Thorny issue for farmers



A cyclist injured in an accident caused by hedge cuttings is calling for landowners to be more responsible to road users. Wheelchair-user

Andy Ebben, a health and safety consultant from Market Drayton, was cycling along a lane when both tyres of his recumbent bicycle were punctured by hawthorn and blackthorn debris.

Mr Ebben, 55, was thrown from his cycle onto the road, suffering severe cuts, bruises and grazes, while his £2,500 bike was badly damaged. Mr

Ebben's spinal injury meant he was unable to get up and was forced to phone for help.

Using the free legal advice afforded to him through CTC, Mr Ebben took action against the landowner and won compensation for his injuries and the damage to his cycle.

Christian Shotton of legal firm Russell Jones and Walker's Birmingham office which represented Mr Ebben, said: 'If you are carrying out works that will create a hazard you must use barriers or signs to prevent danger. If you don't, and a third party suffers an injury or losses, you could be liable and negligent.'



PEAK DISTRICT



Left: Dave Bocking. Right: Clive Andrews

NEWS IN BRIEF

CYCLING FOR MENTAL HEALTH

CTC's Cycle Champions Project in Swindon has started a new scheme called Windswept on Wheels (WoW), which aims to promote cycling to people with mental health issues. WoW was launched at the start of World Mental Health Week in October, with the goal of giving anyone in Swindon with mental health issues free access to cycles, safety equipment and storage facilities. Tamina Oliver, CTC's Cycle Champion in Swindon, is working with Swindon MIND, Windswept, and Swindon Active Life. She said: 'Research shows that physical activity is beneficial psychologically. Cycling helps to reduce stress, improves concentration, enables relaxation and boosts endorphins.'

CORRECTION

The main photo on p53 last issue was by Graham Glen not Graham Irving.



HAMPSHIRE

Down to the woods

Since its launch earlier this year, East Hampshire's Cycling for All has been helping people to cycle at Alice Holt Forest. A series of weekday 'Forest Discovery Rides' has welcomed hesitant and lapsed cyclists to the pleasures of riding a bike on woodland paths. The first ride took place on 20th September.

CTC's Cycle Champions Officer Clive Andrews said: 'Forest Discovery Rides are about taking it easy. It's great to enjoy a relaxed bike ride with people and a simple, fun way to do some light exercise.'

For information or to book a place, contact Clive on 07717 721511, email clive.andrews@ctc.org.uk or go to www.ctc.org.uk/easthampshire.

Tandems for the blind

A squadron of tandems with visually impaired stokers took to the roads and paths of the Peak District's Ladybower reservoir thanks to CTC's Cycle Champion for Sheffield Steve Marsden and members of a local walking group for people with eyesight difficulties.

'Visually impaired people often don't have the opportunity to have the exhilaration of riding a bike unless it's on the back of a tandem like this,' said Charlotte Fyne of Sheffield's Visually Impaired Walking Group, 'Being part of something like this gives people fortunate enough to be sighted the feel good factor. So everyone's a winner!'

'I thought it was a great idea,' Steve Marsden said, 'because I knew the blind people who were to take part would get a huge amount of enjoyment out of cycling around Ladybower.'

The walking group includes 40 blind and visually impaired people and around 60 sighted guides, and members Charlotte and Jon Fyne organised the ride with the help of

the CTC and local cycle company Recycle Bikes.

Visually impaired people have different levels of eyesight, and volunteer tandem pilots need to work out what their visually impaired stoker actually needs to know. Charlotte advised that it's nice for pilots to describe the surrounding landscape, and to point out tricky road conditions.

'It's a real benefit to people, because they get to do something they might have thought they would never do again,' said Charlotte's stoker Hannah Burley, who also works as a rehab officer for a charity for the blind. 'You need to know you'll be safe, but you also feel you are involved doing this, you're not just a passive observer.'

After his ride, teenager Jonathan Heenan was ready to take his tandem riding a stage further. 'I'd like to compete,' he said. 'I think one guy took it up and in two years he became a gold medallist. And if he can do it, then I can have a go at it too...'

SCOTLAND

Glasgow's green corridor

At a public enquiry, CTC Scotland has called for Glasgow's East End Regeneration Route to be scrapped and be made into a green route for walking and cycling instead. They claim this would do more for regeneration than any four-lane highway and tackle Glasgow's problems with obesity and climate change too.

The 'green corridor' proposed by Glasgow's cyclists would link Alexandra Park in the north to Richmond Park, Glasgow Green and the River Clyde in the south. Like the proposed road, it would mainly use old railway lines and land which is currently derelict.

CTC Right to Ride Representative for Scotland Peter Hawkins said: 'What the area badly needs is green space. The route could be used to encourage residents to commute by bike and would connect to The Forge shopping centre and Celtic Park. Unlike a road, it would offer a healthy and green alternative means of travel.'

EVENTS IN BRIEF

VELOCITY COMES TO BRUSSELS

One for your diary. From 12th-15th May 2009, Europe's premier cycling conference is coming to Brussels. Velocity takes place every two years. A record turnout in Munich in 2007 saw over 1,000 delegates mingling with ministers, city mayors and other policy makers from across the world to share the best ideas on cycling's way forward. The Brussels theme is 'Re-cycling cities' and will have strong urban and EU themes throughout. In addition to previous events, there will also be a busy public programme with events and exhibitions. See www.velo-city2009.com. More details will appear in forthcoming issues.

STOP PRESS

Help get more people cycling more often: CTC will be starting a programme of volunteer development days across the regions in 2009. Details are still being worked out. In the meantime, keep watching Cycle, CycleDigest, and Newsnet for further information.

Chester hosts AGM & Dinner

 As the nights continue to draw in and the maps come out to plan another year's cycling, it's time for 2009 diaries to be marked with the spring's big event. The CTC National Dinner and AGM take place in the historic city of Chester on 25th April.

Once home to Roman legions, the former port on the River Dee is also home to the UK's oldest racecourse. The city is on the border with Wales and in mediaeval times Welshmen found within the walls after dark could be arrested and locked up for the night. Fortunately for Welsh CTC members, there is no risk of that today! All CTC members are welcome.

The venue for both the AGM and Dinner is easily accessible by train. The Queen Hotel is just opposite the railway station, and there are good rail connections to all parts of the country. For those travelling by bike, traffic-free cycle routes from North Wales, Merseyside and the Cheshire Plain lead to within a few hundred yards of the venue. There is plenty of accommodation to suit all pockets nearby.

On Sunday 26th, freshen up with Chester and North Wales cyclists on a choice of rides to suit all abilities. Venture into the hills of North Wales; cycle through the Cheshire lanes; see the castle where Richard II's treasure is hidden; enjoy the fabulous ice cream at the Cheshire Ice Cream Farm nearby; or have a cuppa at the world-famous café, Eureka, on the edge of Wirral. (Eureka is celebrating its 80th Anniversary in 2009 – it's just 10 years older than the Chester and North Wales CTC.)

Motions for the AGM should be sent to the Director at National Office by 2nd February 2009. Advice on setting out wording and content can be given by the Director or your National Councillor (see page 80 for details). All motions must be accompanied by signatures of a proposer and seconder, who must be current members.

More details will appear on the website, www.ctc.org.uk/agm, and in the next issue of Cycle.

Please send me _____ tickets @ £26 each for the CTC National Dinner on Saturday 25th 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 of local accommodation

Yes No

I will be taking part in the Sunday rides

Yes No

Name and address

Tel _____

Email _____



Photo: Michael Pitt-Payne

Birthday Rides 2009

 Next year's CTC Birthday Rides will take place in Oundle, Northamptonshire, from 8th-15th August. The gently rolling countryside is ideal for cycling and there's plenty to see in the way of market towns, historic sites and houses.

Perhaps the town's greatest claim to fame is Oundle School, one of the largest boarding schools in the country. Cyclists will stay in modern residential accommodation with family, double and single rooms. Camping facilities are close by, at the rugby club.

Local CTC groups are finalising a full programme of rides for all abilities, children's events, a treasure hunt, a free wheeling competition and social events. The famous Birthday Tea will again be a special feature.

The booking form will be available in January on the website www.birthdayrides.org, and by post from CTC National Office.