

Roger Geffen

CTC's Policy Director was awarded an MBE for services to cycling. **Tony Upfold** profiles CTC's head campaigner

Roger Geffen was given a standing ovation when he turned up for CTC's Christmas lunch... despite being four hours late. His delayed arrival was forgiven. After all, he had just kept a more pressing appointment at Buckingham Palace to receive an MBE for services to cycling from HRH Prince Charles.

The Secret Santa gifts littering the lunch tables were left in the shade as Roger's silver medal was passed among the assembled throng. CTC's Policy Director deflected the acclaim away from himself, however, and dedicated his MBE to all cycling volunteers and campaigners in the UK. Volunteers provided a staggering total of 1.5million hours' work last year to support the groups, campaigns and projects run by CTC, where Roger has worked since 2002.

Roger, who swapped a career in classical music production to help orchestrate a better world for cyclists, said: 'I genuinely regard this as an award for the fantastic collective efforts made by everyone involved in cycle campaigning. Without our local volunteers, CTC wouldn't exist as it does today. They are absolute heroes and I want to dedicate this honour to their efforts too. I'm humbled to be appointed an MBE but I would rather the government find some serious funding for cycling than have letters after my name.'

Now aged 50, Roger's earliest cycling

memories involve riding around the small cul-de-sac where he lived in East Sheen, London – and the day a grumpy old neighbour took the bell off his tricycle! After reading music at Oxford University, Roger moved back to his parents' home and decided to cycle to his first job in London rather than use public transport.

He said: 'I took up cycle commuting partly to save money but also because in those days it was an eccentric option, which appealed to me. I soon realised that, far from being crazy, I was overtaking long queues of polluting metal boxes every morning. The

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bike was a far quicker and more sensible way of getting from A to B.'

He became a volunteer with the London Cycling Campaign in the late 1980s and went on to take active roles in various transport and environment groups, including the UK's anti-road movement of the early 1990s. While working in local government, Roger gained a Masters degree in Transport. He then became a consultant, specialising in cycling and sustainable transport projects, before joining CTC in 2002.

He said: 'I have the challenge of persuading the UK's politicians, media



and wider public of the need for action to improve cycling conditions, while positively encouraging more people to cycle, whether for day-to-day journeys or for recreation.'

Roger, who is also a trustee of the Cyclists' Defence Fund, still loves his classical music, and is a season ticket holder at Fulham FC. He was accompanied to Buckingham Palace by his mother Judy, brother Nigel, and Chris Peck, his right-hand man at CTC for eight years. Chris now works for UCI, while studying part-time for a Masters degree in Transport and City Planning.

Roger said: 'If forced to pick out just one person who deserves this honour far more than I do, it would have to be Chris. I personally, and CTC organisationally, have benefited enormously from his phenomenal knowledge and intellect, his infallibly sound judgement, and his total commitment to the cause of cycling.'

'But there are so many people I want to share this honour with too – including my current CTC colleagues. One of the great joys of cycle campaigning is the fantastic people you get to work with. It's what keeps me going as we strive to make MBE stand for More Bikes Everywhere.' ♦



♦ Roger with his mother and brother

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